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JAMES DRAKE,

THE

PICTURE

OF

BIRMINGHAM.

BEING

A CONCISE BUT COMPREHENSIVE

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE

*Account of that Place,*

INTENDED FOR THE

*Information both of Residents and Visitors.*

With a Plan and Twelve Views, Price 3s.

BIRMINGHAM:

PRINTED FOR J. DRAKE, NEW STREET,

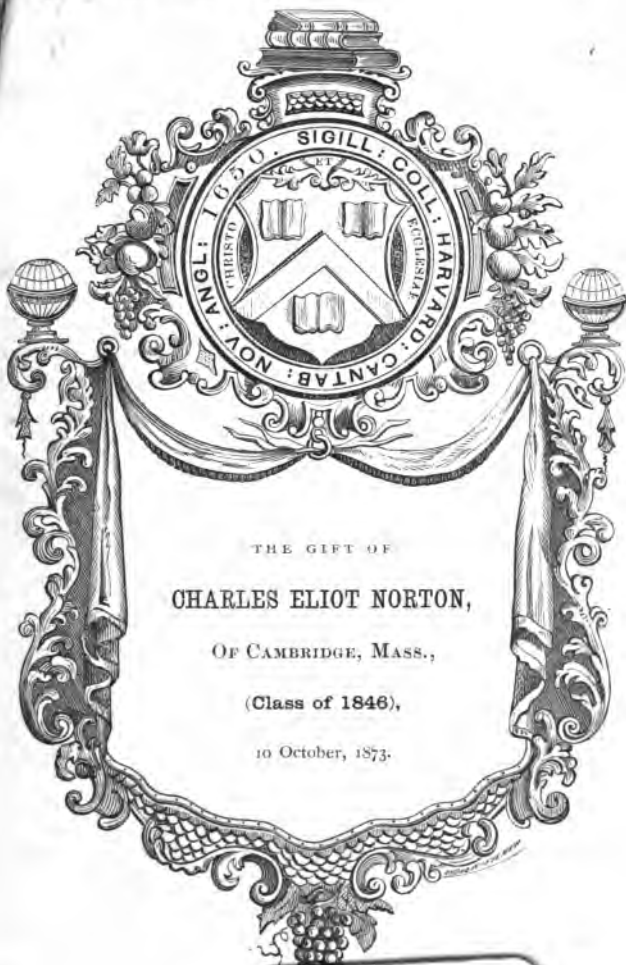
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Birmingham, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1828.



THE  
**PICTURE**  
OF  
**BIRMINGHAM.**

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BEING  
A CONCISE BUT COMPREHENSIVE  
**HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE**  
*Account of that Place,*

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## PREFACE.

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THE magnitude and commercial importance of the Town of Birmingham, and the interest attached to its character, as the emporium of the mechanic and metallic arts, render a description of the place, in the abstract, desirable;—while its rapid increase during the last few years, and the sudden advances made in the hitherto almost neglected walks of *decoration*, render all previously-published descriptive works nearly useless, and call for a new and complete, yet succinct account of its present state.

To supply this deficiency, is the object of the work now offered to the public; in which the author has endeavoured to give a short, but he conceives, a sufficient account of every object, institution, or historical event, of note, connected with his native place; combined with as much narrative interest, as he was able to impart to such subjects.

While, however, it is hoped that the "*PICTURE OF BIRMINGHAM*" may obtain a generally favourable reception, the author professes that his pages are in a principal degree devoted to the service of *Strangers in Birmingham*; and that it has been his chief endeavour to collect and exhibit such information as might be deemed valuable to the casual visitor, during his sojourn in the place; and pleasant to him, as assisting his recollections, after his departure; omitting or curtailing all unnecessary data; such as lists of names, records of passing events of confined or temporary interest only, or minute notices of those whose effects are no longer visible.



In the execution of this work, use has been freely made as occasion required, of several previous publications; relying as the principal authority, on the valuable "*History of Birmingham*," by the late respectable and indefatigable *William Hutton*. Having made this general acknowledgment, further notice of individual obligation will be omitted.

Critical notices are given of the various architectural objects most striking to the perambulator of our streets; whether erected for public or for private purposes. This has been thought especially advisable, at a time when a disposition to encourage external decoration is so obviously increasing. Good taste dictates simplicity of ornament and entireness in design; but mediocre talent, rejoicing in the plasticity of the material of modern workmanship, is too apt to produce crude and ill-arranged specimens; the ardency of an inexperienced imagination too, hurries its possessor, occasionally, into rash attempts at innovation, before he has obtained sufficient knowledge and skill to appreciate and to combine those forms, which, till something superior has been discovered, may be considered as canons of the art.

Fair discussion of these subjects is not without its utility. Strangers receive their first impressions from the objects which strike their attention in the streets of the town they visit; and the residents have them perpetually before their eyes. To be spectators of elegant forms, improves the taste of all beholders; and if proprietors go to expenses for the purpose of ensuring profit to themselves, out of the gratification given to the public, there is every reason to wish that the same public should receive its instructions from capable tutors; should enjoy its "cheap pleasures" of sight, unalloyed by any unnecessary deductions, arising from erroneous combinations, incongruities, or absurdities.

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## CORRECTIONS, &c.

Page 26, *line 3*.—For abundant, read observant.

Page 34, *at foot*.—In the length of Mrs. Bedford's Gallery, for 40 feet, read 80 feet.

Page 43, *at foot*.—We have by some inadvertence stated that the *Gas Company's Building* is distinguished by “two tall chimneys.” We cannot account for the error; there is certainly but one chimney of the kind.

Page 44, *line 22*.—An unfortunate error occurs in our account of the *Worcester Canal*. For £45,000, read £245,000, as the estimated cost.

Page 82, *line 7 from bottom*.—For *destructions*, read *obstructions*.

† This Work is duly entered at Stationers' Hall.

## PART I.

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### Historical Account of Birmingham.

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#### *Its Origin and Increase.*

IN accordance with the plan of our work, which we have briefly detailed, we shall, in the following pages, speak less of what Birmingham has been, than of what it is at present;—we shall be less historical than descriptive. Our glories are of modern date, and it were superfluous in the *Cicerone* of such a place to detain his charge long in the search after antiquities. Still, however, we must “begin with the beginning;” we may fairly claim attention to a compressed account of the ancient state and progress of the town, before we proceed to examine or discuss its present appearance.

It may, therefore, be satisfactory to the visitor to be informed, and pleasant to the inhabitant to reflect, that, not only is the ground on which we stand as ancient as the site of any “eternal city,” but that it has actually been occupied by the *manufacturing town* of Birmingham, from truly remote antiquity.

There is no question, that the inhabitants of Britain must have attained to a considerable degree of civilization long before the time of the Roman invasion. This is evident from the accounts given by *Cæsar* of their warlike equipments. A people, accustomed to bring into the field, “chariots armed with scythes,” could not be barbarians; could neither be provided with the vehicle, nor with the weapon, unless they were familiar with manufactures, or with foreign commerce. The latter is every way improbable; these articles were,

then, of *home manufacture*. It is scarcely questionable that the mines of coal and iron, in this part of the kingdom, were known and worked, in the time of the Britons; and several circumstances direct the acute antiquary to Birmingham, as the precise spot where these natural productions were principally applied to use; where the implements of war and husbandry were fabricated. Birmingham, being a station on one of the great military roads, was well known to the Romans, and bore the latinised appellation of *Bremenium*. It had a regular market, and was governed, as at present, by two constables, before the Norman Conquest.

It is no matter of surprise, that, in the course of so many ages, the name should vary, or its origin be entirely lost. *Bromwycham*, *Bremechem*, *Bermyingham*, are a few among the numerous modes of orthography which have, at different times, prevailed. The component roots of this name, had, in all probability, some meaning, originally; especially when it is considered that *Bromwyck* is the appellation of two neighbouring villages, and that the adjunct, *ham*, is a well-known and often-used Saxon term, signifying *home* or *residence*. The venerable *Hutton* thinks the supposed prevalence of the shrub called *broom*, may have had some connection with the first syllable; but this is rather a gratuitous assumption, and savours not a little of the spirit of Dean Swift's etymologies. The present form of its designation, *Birmingham*, is of modern growth; and those who affect especial correctness, endeavour to preserve something of the old sound, by persisting (absurdly enough) to call it *Brummyum*.

Our ancient "Market Town," however, made but slow progress during many ages; for *Leland*, in his *Itinerary*, made in the reign of Henry VIII. after speaking of Deritend, (*Dirtey*, he calls it) as a "pretty street," states that "the beauty of Birmingham is *one street*, going up along, almost

from the left bank of the brook,\* up a mean hill, by the length of a quarter of a mile." This street would be the upper end of Digbeth, and part of High-street, with branches extending outwards, in different directions, forming the rudiments of the future Edgbaston-street, Bell-street, Philip-street, Moor-street, &c. At the southern extremity of the town stood the Manor-house, of which the present Smithfield is the site; at a small distance was, and is, the Church, long the only one, of Saint Martin; and a little to the north stood the Old Cross, which, after several renewals, was finally removed in 1784. This inconsiderable place of the 16th century must therefore be considered as the *nucleus*, around which the present spreading Birmingham, *the metropolis of Mercia*, has since so rapidly formed.

Situated as Birmingham is, at a convenient distance from the mining districts, yet not so near, as to render it unfavourable as a place of residence; and in all probability the original seat of the manufacture of iron articles, it seems surprising that this increase did not take place at an earlier period. The town, however, continued nearly in the state above described, till the Restoration of Charles II. Shortly after this period, the manufactures of the place began to be varied, to meet the demand of an age of increasing luxury; and the magnitude of the town increased in an equal ratio.

*Hutton* makes the number of streets in 1700 only 28, and several of those incomplete; Park-street being the eastern boundary; the smaller streets between Edgbaston-street and New-street being formed, and the entrances to the town from Dudley, Wolverhampton, and Coventry, distinguished by irregular lines of houses. A few years after this period, St. Philip's Church was erected, which soon drew a town about it, so that in 1731 there

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\* The brook which fed the moat, and which is now obliterated.



had been an increase of 23 streets. During the next fifty years, or to 1781, an augmentation of 71 streets had taken place. In the course of the ensuing ten years, down to 1791, the increase was proportionably still more rapid; and since that time, except during a few years, when considerable stagnation was suffered on account of the war, each succeeding year has witnessed large additions. We have been informed, that during the last year, upward of 2000 houses have been erected in and closely adjoining to the Town. Its present state is nearly as follows :

Streets, 280—Houses 20,000—Population 102,000.

To give a more vivid idea of the slow advances made during many centuries, and the sudden and rapid increase during the last, we have lightly tinted our plan of the Town, to exhibit its progressive state during the time of the ancient Britons; at the periods of the Norman Conquest and of the Restoration of Charles II.; and in the years 1731 and 1781. We shall devote a little space to a more leisurely examination of these advances, when we begin the descriptive part of our work.

#### *The Lords of the Manor.*

The establishment of the manorial division of this kingdom took place at the time of the settlement of the Saxons. The first recorded Lords of the Manor of Birmingham were named Fitz-Auscult, but the male line becoming extinct about the year 1130, the heiress married Gervase Paganall, the Baron of Dudley Castle, into whose hands the property merged. In 1154, Paganall granted the manor to Peter his sewer (the waiter at his table) who, however, though serving a powerful baron in a menial capacity, seems to have been a man of considerable wealth. He assumed, as a surname, agreeably to the frequent custom of the age, the name of his manor, and bore for

his arms, the *Bend Lozenge of five points, Or, on an Azure field*. About the same time, the *field Or and Azure, indented per pale*, was assumed by the Eggebastons or Edgbastons, likewise a family dependent on the Lords paramount of Dudley. These two coats appear to have been afterwards indifferently borne by the de Birmingham; and have been both claimed of late years, as public property, by the Town Officers, who perhaps felt some chagrin, that so important a place should be undistinguished by "the boast of *heraldry*."

The de Birmingham long held the manor, and increased in wealth and consideration. In 1317, William was knighted. In 1327, his son, also William, was summoned to the house of Peers, as William Lord Birmingham; and the Paganalls, Someris, and other Dudley families, being extinct, the same William obtained from Edward II. the custody of Dudley Castle, with all its appendages; but neither the new title, nor the other additions to the honour of the family, were hereditary.

The last de Birmingham who held the manor, was Edward, whose possessions (about 1537) excited the cupidity of John Dudley, the possessor of Dudley Castle, afterwards the ambitious Duke of Northumberland. He first offered to purchase the property, but his proposals not being accepted, he soon after contrived by a deeply-laid scheme of villainy, to have his intended victim accused of committing a highway robbery, and finally, to induce him, as the only means of saving his life, to resign his possessions to the king, Henry VIII, by whom they were, as previously arranged, conferred on the intriguing Duke. The story, as it is told drily and at some length by *Dugdale*, is a most extraordinary one. Dudley must have been the most depraved of men, and de Birmingham probably a weak and timorous character to suit his purpose.

The Birmingham family in the direct male line became extinct with Edward. The Earl of Lowth

is a descendant of a branch which proceeded from the original stock six hundred years ago; and the Bracebridges descend from a female line.

After the decapitation of the Duke of Northumberland in the first year of Queen Mary, the manor was granted to Thomas Marrow, whose family held it till 1746, when it was sold to Thomas Archer, Esq.; from him it descended to Andrew Lord Archer, and remained in the possession of his daughters, co-heiresses, till very lately, when the manorial rights were purchased by the Commissioners of the Street Acts, and are now held by them, for the benefit of the town.

The ancient manorial residence, as has been already stated, was at the southern extremity of the Town, where stood a Mansion of very remote date, defended by a moat. After the expulsion of the family of Birmingham, the Mansion went to ruins, but its liquid barrier remained. A substantial house, and afterwards a manufactory, were erected on the spot (which was known by the name of "the Moat") about a century ago. Some slight vestiges of the original Hall, where the *Court Leets* were held, still remained in the outbuildings, till the year 1816, when the moat itself was filled up, every trace of the original habitation removed, and the area of the domain converted into a market for cattle, which has received the metropolitan appellation of "Smithfield;" a work whose great public utility must necessarily far outweigh the regrets of the partial antiquary. "I have lived," says the aged *Hutton*, in the apprehension of such a catastrophe, "I have lived to witness the destruction of many valuable works of antiquity, and I shall be sorry to see this added to the number."

The moat was fed by a small and sluggish stream, which afterwards turned a thread-mill at the top of Mill-lane, for many years. So gentle was the course of this rivulet, so nearly level its course, that another

stream, proceeding *from the town*, and consequently flowing the contrary way, ran peaceably, parallel with it;—a path-way, of five feet wide, only intervening;—for the space of half a mile, or more. This latter, a filthy Stygian stream, charged with the impure washings of the town, received the appropriate appellation of *Pudding-brook*. The former, on the filling up of the moat, was restored to its original destination, the river Rea, from which it had been diverted for a thousand years; and into which it now flows by an artificial channel, near the place called *Vaughton's Hole*.

### *Ecclesiastical Antiquities.*

Leaving the very ancient parish church of St. Martin, to take its place in the descriptive portion of this work, we proceed to make mention of the obliterated religious establishments which zeal, piety, or fear of the future, induced the gentry of the middle ages to plant in Birmingham. Of these, the principal was

#### THE PRIORY, OR HOSPITAL OF ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE;

the seat of which was, nearly, the present Old Square. The entire domain was bounded by Bull-street, Steelhouse-lane, Newton and John-streets, and Dale-end; a total area of about fourteen acres. The whole was then open country, and being placed on an eminence, must have been a delightful situation, commanding extensive and diversified prospects. "It stood," says *Dugdale*, "at that end of the Town towards Wolverhampton, on the right hand of the road, opposite the sign of the Bull." This religious house was founded at the close of the thirteenth century, by the de Birminghams and other land proprietors, to a great extent; and continued till the dissolution of all monasteries under that pious and reforming monarch, Henry VIII. in the 27th year of his reign, A. D. 1536.

No externally visible traces of the Priory build-

ing remain, but a few marks of the foundations are discernible in the cellars about the Square; and many ornamental fragments of stone have been dug up, which in all probability formed part of its decorations. Vestiges of its existence are also perceived in the names of the neighbouring streets. We have the Upper and Lower *Priories*; the *Minories*; and St. Thomas-street. It may also be worth noticing, that the "sign of the Bull," mentioned by *Dugdale*, and which doubtless indicated an old established inn, gave name to that part of "the Wolverhampton Road," which is now thickly covered with houses, and known as Bull-street.

THE GUILD OF THE HOLY CROSS, erected on the spot now occupied by the Free School, was founded in the year 1383, by a number of the inhabitants of Birmingham. It was first endowed for the maintenance of two priests only; but was shortly afterwards, by the munificence of its donors, extended to a fraternity of both sexes, with a master, wardens, and other apparatus.

After the dissolution of monasteries, the lands and property remained in the hands of the Crown till 1552, when they were granted to the Bailiff and inhabitants of the Town, for the establishment of a Free Grammar School, of which more hereafter.

CLODSHALE'S CHANTRY, was a foundation for the support of a single priest, to sing masses for the soul of Walter de Clodshale, a wealthy and pious worker in iron, and for that of his wife. This was endowed in 1331. The good example was, in 1348, imitated by Richard, son of Walter, who added to the endowment, property sufficient to support a second priest to do the like good office on the souls of himself and his wife. These masses continued to be chanted till all such establishments were abruptly closed by Henry VIII.

We have thus, in the space of a few pages, condensed all that we think it necessary to state, concerning the ancient state of this great Town. Our records of past times exist only on paper. We have no *lions* of antiquity to exhibit to the Stranger; who, in fact, if he be in want of that kind of article, will in vain expect to deal here. We resign all pretensions to such shows, and proceed to other general points of information.

### *Face of the Country, Soil, &c.*

Birmingham is situated nearly in the centre of the kingdom; and as might be concluded from such a circumstance, on comparatively high ground. Its geographical position is in a projecting angle or peninsula of Warwickshire; being its north-west extremity, and abutting on Worcestershire and Staffordshire. The surface of the ground varies considerably, very few streets being perfectly horizontal, and some of them forming very steep declivities. Its general elevation accounts for the paucity of streams and rivers in the neighbourhood. This deficiency renders the prospect of the country less interesting, but there is no scarcity of water for domestic purposes. The geologic character of the place is gravel, upon a substratum of dry alluvial reddish sand, of very considerable thickness; below which, at an average total depth of twenty yards, an ample supply of water is obtained. That in the higher parts of the Town, is what is termed *hard*, but in the lower it is perfectly *soft*, and of the purest quality. There are public pumps of this soft water, at which itinerant dealers fill their *barrel-carts*, and their portable tin vessels; and thus, at a cheap rate, dispense to the farthest parts of the Town, the benefit of this superior fluid.

The porous nature of the above-mentioned strata, and the eagerness with which they imbibe all

moisture, instead of promoting evaporation, render the situation, in spite of the fires and effluvia of its thousand manufactures, eminently healthy.—There are perhaps, few towns of any note or magnitude, which suffer so little from epidemics, or contagious diseases of any kind.

The soil in the neighbourhood is rather light and sandy, but the quantity of manure, which is so easily obtained in the vicinage of a large town, and the importance of every open spot of ground, have led to such a system of culture as renders it highly productive.

Taking an elevated standing, the balcony of St. Philip's Church Tower for instance,—it must be admitted, that the panoramic view is not of the most interesting description. The great extent of the Town, and the multitude of mean houses and streets, which form the mass of every group of building, give a meagre aspect to the near view. The total is large; the integral parts are insignificant. There are few buildings or streets, which, seen from that elevation, force themselves on the attention; nor are there any number of ancient groves, or charily preserved clumps or avenues of trees to vary or enrich the outskirts. In the distance, however, things mend a little, and as we recede from the Town there is no want of wood. The horizon on the Southern and Eastern quarters is generally flat. Northward and Westward its line is more varied.

Descending from his elevation, the observer will find, that though the immediate vicinity of so large a Town, containing so many thousands of the working classes, and their appropriate dwellings, is unfavourable to the picturesque, yet at a very little distance, there are spots of great beauty, of the tranquil and unobtrusive order. The walk up the course of the Rea, towards Moseley, is of this kind. The stream shapes its sinuous course through a

valley consisting of rich meadows, well adorned with small timber, and abundant in vegetation. Towards Edgbaston, also, there is much pleasing scenery; but it must be sought for at a wider distance on this side, for the nearer spots of recollected beauty have been destroyed, in their rural capacity, by the numerous spruce and snug villas, which have latterly sprung up in this direction. The truth is, *country*, if it be verdant and not destitute of wood, must of necessity be pleasing to the inhabitants of towns, especially of closely built and manufacturing towns; and such are the simple claims of the "delightful spots" near Birmingham.

It is to be regretted, that amidst the numerous improvements of late years, it has never occurred to the inhabitants of Birmingham to preserve unharmed, some one plot of ground, some pattern card of natural scenery, as a public walk, or place of recreation. Each succeeding year cuts off some old and well-known site from its character of *country*, so that it becomes almost a wearisome excursion to get into the free air. A well-chosen verdant space, planted with trees, is always beneficial in, or close to a large and dense mass of buildings;—as much so to health as to ornament. In the former of those capacities its effects are certain, even though the latter should be disregarded;—though fashion, as is too often the case, should render the place unapproachable by her votaries.

It is extraordinary that, till the commencement of the present century, the value of the neighbouring land should be so little appreciated, that nearly 800 acres remained an open waste, in all the majesty of unproductiveness, on the North-west side of the Town, under the name of Birmingham Heath. Late years have, however, taught a more profitable lesson. Nearly the whole is now enclosed; is dotted with houses, and varied



with gardens; and is rapidly advancing into richness and utility.

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### *Trades.*

The increase and high importance of Birmingham have obviously arisen from its manufactures. From the time of the earliest records, it had been known and celebrated as a place inhabited by, and abounding in workers in iron; "Smiths and Cutlers, Loriners and Naylor's;"\* and for many ages the efforts of its inhabitants were confined to the production of the coarser and heavier articles of that useful metal. A *Birmingham Manufacturer*, and a *Birmingham Blacksmith*, were long held to be synonymous and convertible terms; nor was it till the commencement of the last century that many persons were engaged in furnishing the elegancies of life. By degrees, however, the enterprising spirit of ingenious men struck out some invention, in which ornament was combined with utility. The avidity with which such articles were purchased, induced others to follow in the same track or to open new lines, till at length the tasteful and the decorative are full as much the characteristics of the Manufactures of Birmingham as the useful and the necessary.

Above all other sources of improvement, may perhaps be estimated the perfect freedom of this Town from all corporate and chartered dignities, honours, immunities, privileges, and annoyances. No absurd forms or wearisome servitude are necessary to give the active tradesman a right to practise his art here, for the benefit of himself and others. The atmosphere of this place is free to any one, and the consequence has been, that it has reaped the benefit of active talent and industry, flowing in from all quarters. Yet the time has

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\* Leland.

been, when the thriving inhabitants of Birmingham, smitten with desire for the splendid incumbrances of scarlet gowns, emblazoned parchments, maces and furs; petitioned with infinite gravity, for a corporation, which they thought necessary to enable them effectually to resist the "pope and the pretender." This was about the year 1716. The king—George I.—however, happily knew better than themselves what was good for his lieges. The prayer of the petition was scattered to the winds, and Birmingham, instead of obtaining the desired honourable fetters, remains and flourishes, a simple market town, as it was in the time of the Heph-tarchy.

Among the individuals whose successful exertions led to the rapid and sudden advancement of the manufacturing prosperity of the town, was John Taylor, Esq. the founder of the wealthy family of that name. No source of profitable speculation, connected with ornamental manufacture, seemed to escape his attention. He appeared to possess an exhaustless invention, combined with the rare faculty of an almost intuitive perception of the final acceptableness of any novelty which struck his active mind. Such an example was quickly followed by numberless imitators, and the variety of the Birmingham manufactures increased with rapidity during the middle and close of the last century.

Another of those gifted personages whose commanding talents diffuse benefits all around them, was the late Matthew Boulton, Esq. who, by the magnificence and spirit of his undertakings, by his excellent judgment in the choice of partners and agents—especially evinced in his discernment of the value of Mr. Watt's genius—and by his liberal patronage of skill and ingenuity in every line, also contributed greatly to the establishment of the manufacturing fame of the town near which he resided.

After the heavy fabrics, *buttons* may be considered as one of the oldest characteristic manufactures of Birmingham. These have been made in great variety; from the whimsical and extravagantly-adorned species made for some foreign markets fifty years ago, to the elegantly simple, or more tasteful but less richly ornamented style of the present day, as well as the cheap and showy kinds, which provide for the supply of the least liberal markets.

The *buckle* manufacture, now almost extinct, was the source of employment to hundreds of hands during the latter half of the last century. A change in fashion so entire, so sudden, and so extensive in its effects, as the disuse of this ornament, has seldom been known. It was, however, productive only of temporary inconvenience. The same dexterity which renders a man expert in one branch of work, enables him soon to exert himself profitably in another.

Articles of steel, in the way of tools; or what are called, "heavy steel toys," have always been manufactured to great extent; but *ornamental* steel goods;—*steel jewellery*, as they may be termed, are of more modern introduction, and have experienced great fluctuations. They have been carried to the highest perfection for elegance and brilliancy in this town, and may perhaps be considered as again on the advance. Guns were first made here in the reign of William III.; and have in times of war constituted an important branch of our manufactures. The quantity of musquets furnished monthly during the late contest is almost incredible.

Brass works were introduced about the year 1748, and are now very extensive. Since the adaptation of the *stamp* to the production of the more delicate forms, articles of the highest elegance have been made, in vast quantities; and from their

lightness and the small quantity of metal they consume, are rendered at a very moderate rate.—Scarcely any improvement has had greater effect on the trade of the town than this substitution of stamped work for cast, in ornamental articles.

The increasing fashion of using silver in the implements of the table has introduced the imitative practice of *plating on steel* for knives, forks, spoons, &c. which is carried on to considerable extent. Jewellery and all articles of personal decoration, both in the precious metals, and in showy imitations, are also manufactured in great abundance.

There are several *iron foundries* in Birmingham, whose products are extensive and various; from the ponderous masses of mill and machine work, to the light, elegant, and highly adorned articles of domestic use. In the more minute lines, the use of iron is perpetually increasing, as a substitute for more valuable brass. The manufacture of plain and cut glass; of japanned and *papier machée* articles; of the brilliant wares of the plater, and of the almost equally brilliant imitations of the artist in what is called Britannia metal, are all on the advance. There are several umbrella manufactories, the establishment of which probably arose from the execution of orders for the *brass-fittings* of these useful contrivances. In like manner, the manufacture of the metallic furniture for horses and carriages has produced the addition of the harness itself as a Birmingham article. This has extended itself to saddles, whips, bellows, and other leather goods. Leather itself was once an article of great commercial importance in Birmingham, but the market has gradually declined; the tan-pits are closed up;—the *Leather Hall* has long been removed, and the officers connected with the trade, called *Leather Sealers*, though still annually chosen, have literally no legitimate functions to perform. Their principal qualification is a

tolerable voice, which is exerted twice annually at the Bailiffs' dinners.

During the last few years various causes have operated to introduce certain divisions of the silk and cotton manufactures, in the form of webbing, coach laces, purses, trimmings, fringes, &c. which promise to be a considerable addition to the resources of the town.

It were tedious to attempt any thing like a complete sketch of the manufactures of this large place. They form, to the stranger, a highly interesting feature; and the examination of their processes is looked to as a source of his most considerable gratification. A few years ago, the doors of our manufactories in general were opened to the curious, and to all who were in search of improvements; and perhaps a degree of vanity was mixed with the eagerness with which all the operations were exhibited, to foreigners, as well as natives, especially if persons of distinction. An injurious use however having, as might be easily anticipated, been made of these freedoms; the wide open system has been followed, in some cases, by one as absurdly close and churlish. Some of our most interesting manufactures have been hermetically sealed against *all* visitants. This is *unfair*, inasmuch as it debar's the inquiring stranger from witnessing those exertions of the mechanical arts which are in fact no secret, but which are practised in one place more than in another. It is *impolitic*, because it is often to see the manufactures, that strangers, with their families, visit or halt at the town. Show-rooms and splendid repositories are very well in their way; but they are insufficient for those who carry a mind, as well as an eye. It will, therefore, be our care to give, in its proper place, a short list of manufactories, in the various principal lines, which are still open to the inspection of strangers, if unconnected with such pursuits, and introduced by respectable residents.

The mode of doing business in Birmingham has totally changed since about the year 1770. Previously to that time, ironmongers and other dealers visited this town in person, to make their own purchases. This was obviously, *to the community at large*, the most expensive, as well as the least effectual mode. The practice of employing agents succeeded, which was afterwards followed by the now universal custom of home merchants, *factors*, as they are termed, travelling the country with *specimens* of the various articles, if portable; or with *pictured representations*,\* where too bulky and numerous; visiting with their succinct and universal but portable *show-rooms*, the person who formerly not only had to make his journey to Birmingham, but to apply to the individual fabricators. The mode of travelling with patterns, connected with the plan of agency, is also pursued with similar success by the merchants who supply foreign markets.

To watch over the welfare and the mercantile interests of the town, associations have been at different times proposed. A *commercial committee* was founded about the year 1790; another with some variations in 1803; but these have merged into the CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, established in 1813. The intention of this institution was to form a bond of union among the various commercial and manufacturing branches; and to keep a watchful eye on all political events and legislative enactments, which should have an influence on the commerce of the town. This society is still in existence, though not in a course of very active exertion.

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#### *Government.*

The ancient and inconsiderable Market Town of Birmingham, was governed by its two Constables in

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\* This circumstance has extended the trades of *engraving* and *copper-plate printing* to a degree unknown elsewhere; while the numberless articles which are exhibited in folding cases and light boxes, have created the trade of *pattern-card making*.

the era of the Saxon Heptarchy; and the same functionaries are still the only really effective officers of town appointment. These were annually chosen by the Lord of the Manor, who also selected the persons to fill the other inferior offices. As a town however advances in wealth, magnitude, and consideration, its inhabitants languish after distinctions. The acts of the Lords of the Manor having been long performed by their Bailiffs or Deputies, the power of the Lords was in process of time, nullified by custom, and the office of Bailiff became independent, and seemingly important. There are two Bailiffs, the *High* and the *Low*—but these titular adjuncts are merely arbitrary. The function of the *Low Bailiff* is to summon an annual court-leet, at which he chooses a jury, who elect all the officers for the ensuing year. Correctly enumerated, these are, the two Bailiffs, two Constables, the Headborough or Assistant Constable, the Constable for the hamlet of Deritend, two High Tasters,\* or Ale-conners;—two Low Tasters, or Flesh-conners,—two Affeirrers, who ratify the rents and amercements between the Lord and his Tenants,—and two Leather Sealers, who eat and sing at Bailiffs' feasts as before stated. The choice therefore of all these virtually rests with the *Low Bailiff*, as holding the absolute choice of the electing jury. The *High Bailiff* was merely a clerk of the market, who took cognizance of all false weights and measures; and who was assisted in the examination of the meats and drinks offered for sale, by the Flesh-conners, and the Ale-conners.

Courtesy has latterly elevated the High Bailiff into the presiding officer at all public meetings; and each Bailiff is expected to be competent to bear the expense of an annual dinner, which in splendour and

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\* *High Tasters for Ale*;—proving the verity of Boniface's assertion of the superior importance of Ale to Meat.—(Vide the *Beaux-Stratagem*).

hilarity may mate with the civic feasts of incorporated boroughs. And that shows and processions should not be entirely wanted, the High Bailiff, in accordance with his manorial duties, perambulates the streets at Whitsuntide and Michaelmas, duly proclaiming that the fairs shall be holden; and attended in his progress, by the Jury of the Court-leet bearing their wands; by such military music as the belligerent state of the town will supply; and by certain grotesque figures in the garbs of the fire-men of insurance companies.

Of the Magistrates whose sphere of action is more especially the town of Birmingham, the number has been gradually increasing. According to Hutton the whole business of the town, as cognizable by a Justice of the Peace, was, during his early residence here, conducted by John Wyrley, Esq. In the year 1817, there were ten, and the number has sometimes been still greater. We have not seen this circumstance properly accounted for. To conceive that it was *necessary*, were to libel the character of the town. Other equally efficient causes must have prevailed; perhaps a desire to lighten the labours of each. This increasing magnitude of the body of the magistracy is not however confined to Birmingham. Some one or more of the Magistrates attend for the dispatch of business at the Public office in Moor-street, every Monday and Thursday.

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#### *Markets and Fairs.*

The established market day in Birmingham is Thursday. This, as has been before observed, was regularly held in the time of the Saxons. But a single weekly market, as the magnitude of the town increased, was found insufficient. Custom has therefore given the requisite accommodation, by making Monday and Saturday also considerable markets. The latter especially arose out of absolute necessity. It was desirable on the one hand, that the numerous



workmen who received their pay at the close of the week, should find a market, stocked with provisions of every kind; and on the other, the dealers in articles of constant use were glad to give their attendance at a time when so many buyers flocked to the place of resort. There are few more bustling or more cheerfully noisy scenes than that presented by the Birmingham market place, on a Saturday evening, between the hours of seven and eleven. The innumerable lights give the area the brilliancy of a well-illuminated room. The show of provisions is prodigious; the shrill cries of those who assiduously recommend their wares, rise incessantly above the regular hubbub of the time, mixed with the still harsher screams of ballad-singers; and the frequenters of the market are seen in every quarter, hurrying to lay in materials for their Sunday's dinner, and part of the supplies for the ensuing week.

There are two Fairs annually held by charter of Edward III. to William de Birmingham. The one at Whitsuntide, during the three last days of the week; the other, likewise continuing three days, and commencing usually with the last Thursday in September. The quantities of horses, cattle, sheep, &c. brought to each fair is considerable; but excepting in these, the Whitsuntide fair is one of little business. It is however a time of great mirth and hilarity. Falling on a week which is universally held as a holiday, and in the gay season of the year; it is frequented by unnumbered crowds of visitants from the surrounding country; is enlivened by the presence of numerous itinerant exhibitors, who find its duration present an ample harvest to their exertions; and thus preserves entire, the true characteristics of the country assemblage, with all its excitement and qualification;—mixed, it must be confessed, with the more boisterous mirth and vicious indulgence which are apt to prevail at such times, both in town and country.

The Michaelmas Fair, in addition to its show of cattle, presents a remarkable feature, in the immense quantities of *onions* which are brought for sale. The morning of the first day, exhibits piles and stacks of this article, which, but that regular custom indicates the quantities which will be demanded, would seem preposterous.

Great inconvenience is felt from the total want of all accommodation to buyers and sellers at the market. There is no proper arrangement of standings nor any kind of building for shelter or security. This crying deficiency, however, it is hoped, will be removed before many years have elapsed, as it is said to be in contemplation to pull down a considerable mass of building between Bell-street and Phillips-street, and to adapt the opened space to the purposes of the market.

It is not many years, since swine and horses were assembled near the eastern extremity of New-street; hay in the lower part of Ann-street (thence called the Haymarket); and other horses in what was called Brickkiln lane, but afterwards the Horse Fair. The inconveniences of this divided market were at length found so great, that their effectual remedy was loudly called for; and in the year 1816 the area of the old manorial Mansion was opened and adapted for the reception of the above-mentioned articles of country produce. Still, however, in this place, with all its new arrangements, a piazza, hall, or other place of shelter, is wanted for the transaction of business.

Besides the Fairs, four Wakes are annually held in and about Birmingham. The English wake is properly the festival of the Saint whose name is attached to the Church. In Birmingham, however, these honours have, fortunately, been only partially bestowed on the holy persons in question. Deritend wake is the only ancient one, and is the most considerable. It probably took its rise with the first

erection of the chapel of St. John, in 1583; and is held in the open part of the hamlet, a little beyond the bridge. Edgbaston wake has by degrees left its proper domain, and enlivens the suburban streets of Birmingham, which abut upon Edgbaston parish. Chapel wake, commemorative of the erection of St. Bartholomew's chapel; and Bell wake, honouring the hanging of the new bells in St. Philip's church, were, as *Hutton* well remarks, "hatched and fostered by the publicans for the benefit of the spiggot." They present scenes of mere rudeness and intemperance, little enlivened by the genuine merriment which distinguishes country assemblages of this nature.

## PART II.

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### *The present State of Birmingham described.*

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#### *Its General Aspect.*

WE have hitherto taken the office of narrator; we must now play the describer; conducting the stranger through the various parts of the town where any thing worthy of his attention is to be seen.—We must first however suppose him to make his entrance in due form.

We will not affirm that any one of the accesses to Birmingham possesses a very imposing character. In fact, the principal ones;—those from London, Bristol, Liverpool, and Derby, lead through streets of rather mean appearance. The suburbs, however, beyond the town's edge, are greatly improving. The situations on every side which have any pretensions to the character of *pleasant*, are rapidly appropriating to the erection of neat or gay rows of houses or detached villas, to a considerable distance. The respectable and wealthy inhabitants are seeking their homes, as much as possible, without the pale of the crowded town, whose skirts are thus every where trimly decorated with these newly-acquired graces.

Wherever a good view of the town can be obtained from an eminence, especially on the southern side, its appearance is rather striking; not from the splendour of its individual and detached parts, but from the magnitude of the aggregate. The well-varied ground throws the contours of building into grand and distinctly defined masses; producing, under certain states of the atmosphere, highly picturesque combinations. The traveller who approaches from the Coventry or Alcester roads is particularly sensible of this. The entrance from Stourbridge,

through the thriving parish of Edgbaston, however, is by far the most pleasing. It leads through long lines of cheerful and rather elegant buildings, with gardens and shrubberies; and finally enters the town by streets of respectable appearance and handsome width. From the other quarters, the streets are generally like those which form the exterior of most large towns; old without being valuable as antiques;—irregular, but not picturesque. In short, dry matter of fact streets, without any objects of interest, till the centre of the town is approached.

We shall now leave the traveller to find his way to the inn of his choice, and permit him to “take his rest” therein,—which he may do, at our best houses, as luxuriously as ever *Falstaff* claimed the right of doing; and we shall be ready at his early leisure, to attend him in his search after the beauties of the place.

### *The Plan of Birmingham.*

Before we proceed to the actual examination of the various objects of interest in the Town of Birmingham, we will, for a short time, claim attention to the PLAN which faces our title page, and which will we think afford matter for consideration.

The feature of novelty to which we have principally to refer, is the *coloured arrangement*, by which we have exhibited the progressively increasing magnitude of the Town; and we begin by distinctly stating the various indications of the several eras pointed out. They are as follow :—the three first being from Hutton’s statements, the other two from old published Plans.

The supposed site and magnitude of the Town before  
the Invasion of Julius Cæsar, is coloured ..... } *Purple.*

Its increase at the Norman Conquest, in 1066..... } *Pink.*

—————at the Restoration of Charles II. in 1661 } *Blue.*

—————in the Year 1731..... } *Yellow.*

—————in the Year 1781..... } *Green.*

For the data of the *two first* of these circuits, we presume our venerable historian depended on obscure intimations of our oldest topographers, assisted by conjecture, and slightly hinted tradition ; for the *third*, the period had not so long passed by, when he commenced his researches, but that careful inquiry would lead to the discovery of the facts ; and this third state itself is so small, that the judicious antiquary could not greatly err in fixing on the directions in which the previous increase had taken place. For the two latter, we have existing documents for our guidance.

There is found in the minds of most persons, a desire to be made acquainted with the former state of places, with which they are now familiar. There is a peculiar interest attached to the tale of him who shall accompany us through the thronged scenes of manufacture and commerce, and shall say ; " Here, in this crowded and populous situation, within my memory, the ploughshare left its track ; and the farmer stacked his hay, where now the hurrying whirl of machinery is heard. Where the methodical arrangements of the office and the counting-house expedite the transactions of commerce with every quarter of the globe ; where long streets, intersected by others as long, render every yard of ground a valuable portion of property ; the reverted eye of my recollection easily traces the forms of pasture and of hedge-row ; the quiet and the beauty of rustic life."

Such information, but to a greater extent, is afforded by the variegated PLAN before us. Potent as the Orphean Lyre, the spirit of commercial enterprise has exerted her magic force ; has by her continually applied spells, in a surprisingly short space of time, raised the multitudinous masses of building, which form by far the greater part of this still enlarging town. A century ago is sufficient for the age of our antiquity.

This extraordinary change in the appearance of Birmingham would be most powerfully perceptible to the active and abundant *octogenaire*, born about the year 1730. Before he quitted the stage, he would have seen the town something like what it now is; and would be able to recollect the time when its boundaries were little varied from those of the *fourth* of our coloured circuits. And such a man was *Hutton*. He entered Birmingham in 1741, with his faculties wide awake, fully prepared for the reception and retention of new impressions. As ardently devoted to the acquisition of knowledge—especially connected with topographical and antiquarian research—as to the accumulation of a competence; he appears early to have commenced his course of memoranda and inquiries. Conversation with the then seniors of the place, would supply him with precise information as to the state of the town about fifty years before, which would bring him back to the important era of the revolution; little varying probably from what it was at the period of the restoration, from whence the first grand and decided advances might be dated. Such a man was born to be a topographical historian;—and of Birmingham especially. He saw her, or conversed with those who had seen her, almost in her infancy, and he lived to witness her maturing growth. The first edition of his *History of Birmingham* appeared in 1781, and he lived long enough in the present century to see completed or commenced, a number of our improvements and alterations.

It may seem somewhat extraordinary that no vestige whatever of *ancient Birmingham*, properly so called, should be still visible; this however is the fact. Except St. Martin's church, which has been disfigured to make it look modern; there is nothing older than the *black and white* houses of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The truth is, that being a place, from the remotest ages, of *manufacturing cele-*

brity alone; undignified by the presence of any families of aristocratic importance, except the Lords of the Manor; it was not probable that any peculiarly lasting edifices should be erected here. The inhabitants built houses for their own purposes, and dreamed not of perpetuating their glories to far posterity. Even the venerable *Guild of the Holy Cross*, founded in the fourteenth century, was but a snug and warm repository for the nuns and monks of Birmingham, constructed of wood and plaster, something like the houses to which we have just adverted. The *Manor-house* itself, the long favourite seat of the de Birmingham, was of no better description: "A mansion house of tymber," it is called by Master Leland. The *Priory*, that lordly abode of cushioned churchmen, was indeed of stone, and doubtless, splendidly adorned; but this was rich enough for plunder, and was systematically destroyed. *Virtue* was never the pursuit of the "Birmingham blacksmiths," who felt no anxiety to preserve the ruins of the place, and accordingly *borrowed* them as occasion served, for building materials. Even *Hutton* himself, who, in 1775, took down a house built a few years after the dissolution of abbeys; the clearing away of which turned out "twenty waggon-loads of old stones, great numbers of which were highly finished in the gothic taste; parts of porticos, windows, arches, ceilings; some fluted, some ciph-  
 ered, yet complete as the day they were left by the chissel;"\*—never thought of preserving these valuable relics, out of which a more modern antiquarian would have constructed some exquisite piece of tessellated work. He suffered his masons to destroy the greater part of them; and used the remainder in the fire-place of—"an under kitchen!"

The inquirer after our *old Town* must therefore be content to look out for buildings approaching the

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\* Hutton's Birmingham, 1819, page 220.



date of 1600; of these we shall see some specimens in the course of our progresses through the town; but even these are fast falling to decay.

When St. Martin's Church was built, it stood, in all probability, at the edge or out-skirts of the town, as was commonly the case. The first increase was in a southerly direction, on account of the principal roads lying on that side, also for the convenience of water, and the neighbourhood of the manor house. The extension was afterwards northward, owing to the intimate connection with the places on that side; as Walsall, Wednesbury, and Wolverhampton. It is in fact extraordinary (as inspection of the plan will show), that the first southern and eastern enlargements continued so long the almost unaltered boundaries. On these sides Birmingham, at the restoration, and in 1731, extended little beyond *Birmingham at the conquest*.

Of the amazing increase of later years, many of the streets are composed of houses of an inconsiderable description, abounding too in retired courts and yards, filled with multitudes of still smaller dwellings. The ground on all sides being private property, the most profitable mode of application is naturally the object of the proprietor; and portions either freehold or on long building leases, are generally attainable for such purposes as best suit the wishes of the building speculator. This has produced that ample supply of cheap and comfortable, but not ornamental residences of the middle and working classes, which has become characteristic of the town. The members of each family here dwell in their own separate habitations; while, in more dignified places, surrounded by lands unapproachable by the trowel, those who cannot afford tolerable houses are obliged to pile their residences one upon the other, or to burrow into the cellarage, in order to find space. External appearance is sacrificed among us, but the means of preserving health

are obtained, and the hazard of moral contamination is lessened.

These, however, are the *fillings up*; many of the main streets are good, and the eyes of the inhabitants are now fully opened to the desirableness of studying ornament. Our ground-plot is liberally spotted with shaded figures representing buildings which may be termed more or less *public*;—as Charitable Institutions; Joint Stock Companies' Offices; Places of Worship, &c.: while the Churches of St. Martin and St. Philip, a few Dissenting Meeting-houses, the Free School, and three Crosses, were all that our grandfathers could boast.

It is amusing to examine the plans which have supplied us with our circuits of 1731 and 1781 (as published in those years by Westley and Hanson, respectively), and to notice the different appropriation of the same spots of ground. In the earlier of these we find two extensive *cherry orchards*, one between New-street and Pinfold-street, stretching eastward as far as Peck-lane, the other, near St. Philip's Church, which last has left a trace of its existence in standing sponsor to *Cherry-street*. In this open and *country* situation also was placed "Corbett's bowling-green," which gave name to the narrow passage called Corbett's Alley, now almost forgotten, and merged into Union-street. *Kettle's steel-houses* are distinctly figured, illustrative of the name of the adjoining street, and commemorative of the father of the steel-process. The intermediate spaces between the streets in both these plans are filled with dotted squares of garden ground, many of them spacious, and gaily parterred. These have nearly all disappeared, and their places are occupied by closely-wedged courts, and ranges of shopping and warehouses. *New-hall*, the seat of the Colmores, a timbered house with two wings and a receding centre, built by the trading founder of the family, in the reign of James I. between what are

now Lionel and Great Charles-streets; in the elder plan remains at a pretty distance from the nearest buildings; in 1781, it is itself their boundary; and was shortly afterwards fairly forced off the ground by the advances of Newhall-street. The ancient appearance of St. John's Chapel, Deritend, is distinctly given in Westley's plan; a small cruciform edifice, with a *pigeon-house* tower. The spirit of the time is notified by numerous plots of ground marked out in squares as "Land for building;" while the inscription at its foot is a triumphant record of the increase of the Town since 1710, in a proportion of *fifty per cent.* namely, from 2604 houses, and 15,032 inhabitants, to 3709 houses, and 28,286 inhabitants.

Early in the reign of the late King, when the inhabitants began to think it necessary to *improve* as well as to enlarge the town; they had the rubbish of centuries to remove. Various quarters were clogged and incumbered by ancient and authorised encroachments on the boundaries; narrow openings and arched entrances to streets; accumulated nuisances, where open areas ought to have presented themselves. There was also the face of the ground to alter; hills and holes to reduce to something like passable ways; and when it is considered that this expenditure has been unassisted by any public funds, it is really astonishing that so much has been effected; and if some purposes have been inefficiently executed, an apology may be offered on the ground of the necessity of economy; and of the consequent favourable eye with which a *low estimate* must ever be viewed.

Among the late improvements we must mention the numbering every house, and affixing the names of the streets in conspicuous situations; the figures and letters appearing in full and distinct relief on durable tablets of cast-iron;—and above all, the gradual substitution of stone flagging for the causeways, instead of the sharp-pointed pebbles, so long the

opprobrium of the place, and on which the stranger painfully worked his way, marvelling that streets so long should be made so execrably wearisome. This stigma is now in the course of removal, and the completion of the change, at least in all our principal streets, may be confidently anticipated, and will do much to uphold our claims to the title of residents in a *handsome town*.

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### DESCRIPTIVE RAMBLES.

There are two ways of describing a town in print. One is by classifying the objects of note, and giving the account of each in sequence, according to its *destination*;—the other is by leading the inquirer in imaginary perambulations through the streets; pointing out the objects that strike our eyes, without regard to any order, except that of *situation*. The latter we have preferred as the liveliest, and on the whole, the most satisfactory mode of proceeding; and we shall endeavour to provide against the defects inseparable from the plan, by giving a classified list of the objects of interest, with full references to the places where these descriptions will be found.

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#### *The First or Western Walk.*

In our wanderings through the streets of Birmingham, it seems advisable to fix upon some one point from which each ramble may commence. We shall accordingly select the junction of New-street with High-street, as our place of meeting with the inquisitive sojourner; and the spot from whence we will diverge in various directions in search of the memorable and the interesting. Taking our station here, therefore, we offer our services to be his guide through the maze of streets; and his *Cicerone* to point out the various objects worthy of notice, which lie in our way.

And first, setting our faces westward, we will proceed along the spacious and handsome street, at whose extremity we are standing. This end of New-street was among the earliest branches which took their rise from the "one street," which, according to *Leland*, formed "the beauty of the town," in the 16th century. Some recollection of its original plan is preserved in the comparative narrowness of this end, but every vestige of its ancient appearance has long vanished. Till the commencement of the improvements, about fifty years ago, the entrance from High-street was by an arched gateway.

After proceeding a few paces, the street suddenly widens, and the *coup d'œil* it presents is one of considerable interest. The line is gently curved, which in an irregularly built street is preferable to perfect straightness, as it exhibits to most advantage the various objects which present themselves. The prevalence of the use of *Roman Cement* as the material for external decoration, has given an impulse to the spirit of ornament, in the better part of the town; and this, above every other quarter, has been indebted to the skill and science of our architects. We will notice the more striking instances as we pass.

The portico of the HEN AND CHICKENS HOTEL is the first striking object, and breaks with pleasing effect the line of buildings. The architect has boldly ventured to attach this massive projection of the Doric order, graced,—we might say *loaded*,—with balustrades and ornamental urns; to the original and uncharacterized edifice. It is easy to remark that the addition and the main building are incongruous; but the artist was aware that the new member would be usually viewed in profile, and that, *then*, the projecting PORTICO, though a minor part, would become to the eye a principal object. A shelter for company alighting from carriages

was wanted ;—consistency of design could not be preserved, and has been, with propriety, sacrificed to effect.

A little further, on the same side, is the FREE SCHOOL; an institution, endowed, as has been already stated, by Edward VI. with the lands formerly belonging to a religious society. The building is of brick, in tolerable taste, erected about the year 1707, at which time the original edifice was taken down. It consists of two projecting wings, and a deeply-receding central member, from which rises a square tower of respectable appearance, crowned with a cupola, and containing a niche for a very middling and tranquil-looking statue of the royal donor, which is now removed,—whether for repairs, or permanently, is uncertain. In one of the rooms there is also a well-executed bust of the same monarch, by Scheemaker.

The lands which support this institution have progressively improved since their valuation by the Commissioners of Henry VIII. when they were rated at £31 per annum. They consist, in great measure, of ground-rents, in and about Birmingham, and produce an income of some thousands per annum.

Over the school preside a head and second-master, with handsome salaries. There are also proper ushers, and writing and drawing-masters. The principal object to which the attention of the masters is directed, is classical education, agreeably to the original prescription of the charter; and there are ten exhibitions of about £25 per annum each attached to the school. Were the system of education more general, the large revenues might doubtless be made more infinitely beneficial than they are, to a place like Birmingham; but the definite provisions of the charter are in the way of such amelioration. Such lumber of past ages requires. It may be confidently affirmed in all cases, a th-

rough renovation, undertaken by no hands less efficient than those of the legislature. "Schools and colleges," observes a late writer in a periodical work, "were founded by monks, for the education of monks." This is true in spirit, though not to the letter, in the case of the Birmingham Free School. As a *Grammar School*, it is extremely well conducted by the Reverends John Cooke and Rann Kennedy, the head and second masters. There are also eight inferior or branch schools, supported by the funds of the endowment, where are taught the first rudiments of an English education. This is a partial improvement, opposed to the letter of the charter, but wisely made in accordance with the spirit of an improving age. The time may come, when the charter will be further infringed upon.

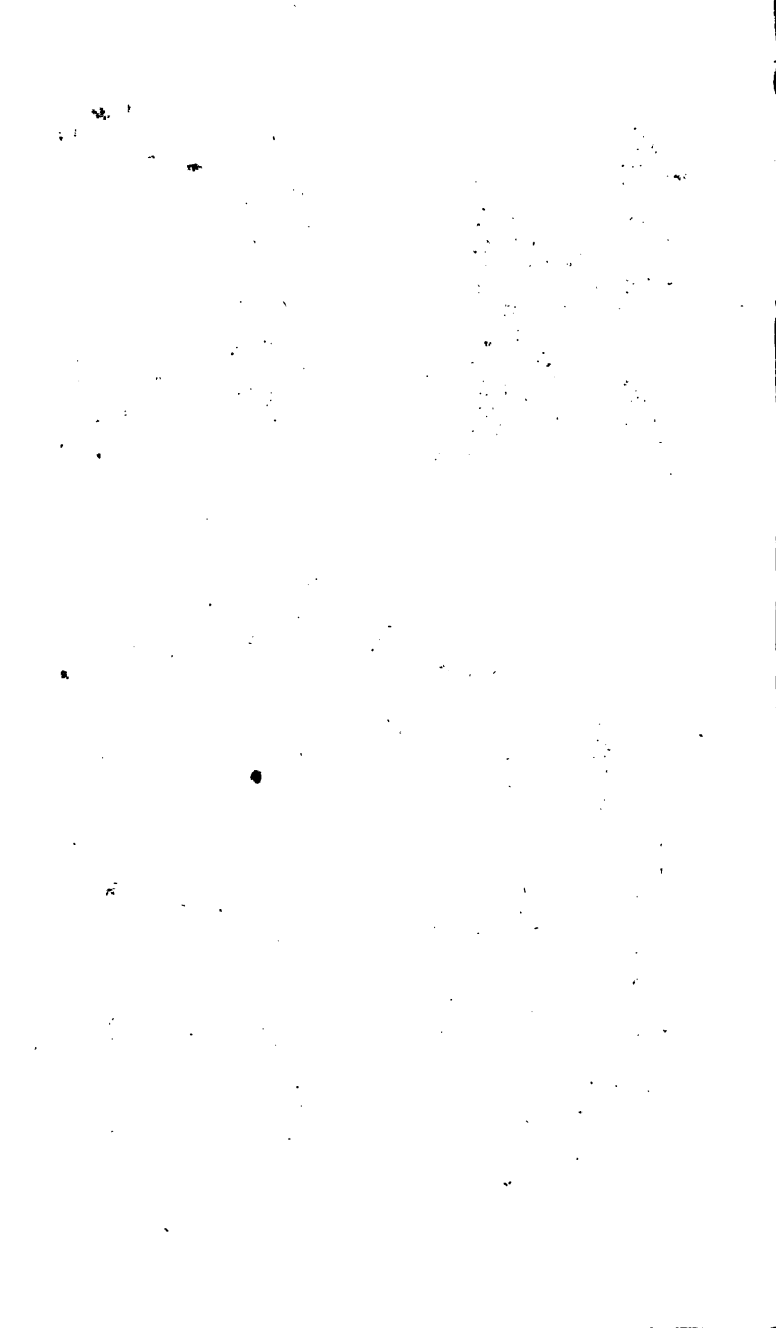
Casting our eyes over the way, we notice a range of buildings, of considerable architectural pretension. The first of these is adorned by a magnificent frontispiece of the Corinthian order, more remarkable for the elegance of its design, and the correctness of its proportions, than for the appropriateness of its situation, or for the mode in which it is attached to the building, which consists of the shop and show-rooms of Mrs. Bedford, for glass and china ware. Two gigantic columns are placed abruptly before the windows; thus obstructing the view of the elegant exhibition they are intended to illustrate. From the centre of the ground apartment, or shop, rises a geometrical staircase, which might serve as the access to Aladdin's Hall of Diamonds; being decorated with balusters of the most brilliant cut glass. This leads to the show-room; a well-stored gallery, of 40 feet in length, supported by Doric columns from the most severe Grecian authorities. The effect of the whole would have been improved, had the architecture of the interior, and of the exterior, been reversed.

Adjoining to this ornamental edifice is the house



1. Buildings in New Street. 2. Theatre. 3. Fire Office & Library.





and upholstery depot of Mr. Hensman, the ground-floor of which is decorated externally with an elegant Ionic colonnade.

A little beyond, on the same side, is a singular edifice, of large size, and novel design. It consists of a rusticated body, from which advances a double tier of columns. The lower, of fluted Doric, after the Parthenon; the upper of Ionic, with neat balustrades in the intercolumniations. The pillars of the latter colonnade serve as detached supports to a range of allegorical figures, bearing relation to the Fine Arts and Belles Lettres. These statues are well adapted to break the otherwise heavy effect of the lofty, massive, and unadorned upper sections of the work.

We will enter the building, which contains the show rooms of Mr Jones. These are approached by a spacious and gracefully-turned staircase, and are fitted up in a style of classical elegance, richness of decoration, and tasteful attention to commodiousness, which are creditable to the projector and to the architect. They are amply stocked with every article of jewellery, plate and plated goods, papier machée wares, and almost every article of Birmingham manufacture of ornamental construction. To these are added a choice selection of paintings, some of them by masters of high note. Besides his splendid and well-furnished show rooms, Mr. Jones's establishment offers the important feature of an extensive manufactory of various descriptions of light goods, which is open to the inspection of strangers.

Our first view comprises the three last mentioned objects, together with the opposite portico of the Hen and Chickens.

In this part of New-street is the stand of HACKNEY COACHES. These have been established in Birmingham about fifty years. Their general ap-

pearance and equipment are much on a par with the better kind of similar vehicles on the London stones.

Casting our eyes down King-street, a narrow turning on the left, we observe a tall brick building, now a place of worship, occupied by the Methodists of the connection of Lady Huntingdon. The place was built for a theatre, and was so appropriated till a larger and more elegant edifice was deemed necessary. The building in question retains internally some marks of its original destination, which blend curiously with its present adaptation.

A slight digression to the right, up Cannon-street, brings us to the meeting of the Particular or Calvinistic Baptists, a neat edifice founded in the year 1752, but enlarged in 1780, and again in 1806; to meet the demands of the thriving congregation. At the back is a large school for the youth of the flock.

Near this spot is the house of the PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, established in the year 1800, on a small scale. The society then assembled in an obscure apartment, and the members read lectures on scientific subjects, to small and select audiences; but increasing in numbers, the premises now occupied were purchased in 1813, and fitted up in a convenient manner. They contain a small, but elegant theatre for the delivering of lectures; a museum; rooms for the pursuits of experimental philosophy, with extensive apparatus; a news-room, and proper apartments for the conservator of the place. There is usually a course of lectures on a given subject delivered each winter, by a professor engaged for the purpose; which are succeeded by detached lectures, read by the fellows of the institution. The attendance is usually numerous and rather brilliant.

Another turn into a small branch street brings us

to the ASSAY OFFICE, a low and plain building, where all articles of plate, manufactured in this town, are sent to be assessed in the duty, and to receive the Government stamp, indicative of the quality of the metal. In the same street also is the entrance to a large manufactory of Pins, the only one in Birmingham. But all access to its interior, "except on business," is now prohibited by the proprietor. Luckily, *pins* are made in other places, where other customs prevail.

Returning to the line of New-street, and pursuing our way, we cross the opening of Temple-street, where, looking to the right, we have a peep at the elegant dome of St. Philip's church; and at the corner of a newly-formed street, we soon after perceive the POST-OFFICE, a handsome building, lately much improved by enlargements and alterations, particularly by the introduction of a Piazza, sufficient for the shelter of persons who are waiting for the delivery of letters. The departures and arrivals of the various Mails will be found in another part of this work.

Opposite the Post Office is the truly elegant front of the THEATRE, whose architect was, we believe, Harrison, of Chester. The front consists of a massy piazza, and a light colonnade over it, with wings tastefully displayed. In the upper compartments are well-executed medallions of Shakspeare and Garrick, the fathers of the Drama and the Stage of this country. Dramatic exhibitions are not of ancient standing in Birmingham. During the first quarter of the last century, they were conducted by strolling companies, who occupied temporary sheds or booths in various situations. In 1730, a stable-like building was fitted up for the purpose, in Castle-street; ten years after, the first regular Theatre was erected in Moor-street; and in 1750 a rival company established another in King-street. Two Theatres

however, as might be expected, were too many for the young growth of Birmingham taste, and the first erected was let to a religious society. In 1774, a third, on a far superior scale of accommodation and elegance, was erected in New-street; and the King-street Theatre, as has been observed, shared the fate of that in Moor-street;—it was converted into a place of Worship. The new edifice received its completion in the erection of the light and appropriate front, which now engages our attention. This Theatre has been twice destroyed by fire; the first in 1792, after which it was rebuilt on an enlarged scale in the space of four years;—and lastly, on the 6th of January, 1820; but by incredible exertion it was rebuilt, and opened for the reception of the public in September, the same year. In both instances the front was happily uninjured. The present may safely be termed one of the most superb Theatres out of the Metropolis. Its receipts, when well filled, amount to about £260.—The management has been for several years ably conducted by Mr. Bunn; the efforts of whose regular companies, assisted as they have been by Metropolitan performers, have deserved better success than has generally rewarded them.

Attached to the Theatre are extensive premises, intended for a Hotel or Tavern, having a spacious assembly room, billiard room, coffee room, &c. under the style and title of the SHAKSPEARE TAVERN. From some cause, however, it has never been supported in that capacity, and the apartments are now, with the exception of the billiard room, pretty constantly let to exhibitors of various descriptions, Lecturers, Auctioneers, &c.

Adjoining the Theatre is PORTUGAL HOUSE, so called by its original proprietor, who had gained a fortune in the Portugal wine trade. Its design is chaste and elegant; it stands back from the street;

and seen from a little distance, forms a fine group with the Theatre. This we have endeavoured to illustrate in our *second* view.

Crossing the way again, we come to a circular building, with a projecting portico, originally intended for the reception of *Panoramas*; but not being liberally supported, the proprietor endeavoured to save expense by introducing paintings of very inferior merit. This naturally made bad worse, and the place was converted into an Auction Room. A few years ago it was purchased by a society, and appropriated to the purpose of an ACADEMY OF ARTS. The large circular apartment contains a fine selection of casts from the finest sculptures of antiquity, of which the principal portion was presented by Sir Robert Lawley, of Canwell Hall, near Tamworth. To the benefits of this institution the youth of the town are admitted as pupils, at regularly-appointed hours, on a plan, combining liberality with utility. Such an institution is admirably calculated to promote the advance of true taste and good feeling in the fine arts, in a town whose manufactures depend so greatly for their prosperity on their superiority in design and decoration. The *coup d'œil* of the interior is good and interesting; strangers are admitted without difficulty, on the introduction of a subscriber.

The next object which claims our attention is CHRIST CHURCH, or the FREE CHURCH, a building, which, placed as it is, ought to have borne a more imposing appearance. It stands on an elevated spot, forming an angular, jutting promontory in the busy confluence of several streets. In order to obtain a level area, one side of the Church-yard is raised above the street to an altitude sufficient to allow of a neat row of vaults and shops under it, fronting to New-street. The advantages of situation, are however lost, by the insignificance and baldness of the design. At the western front is a

portico, which is intended to give an august effect to the whole; but though lofty and massive, its own proportions are far from being correct, and it has little congruity with the body, and still less with the spire; this last is ungraceful in its form, ultra-incongruous in its connection with the rest of the edifice, and ostentatiously bad in its whole effect.

The first stone of this Church was laid in 1805; but, (unlike the Theatre), it was *eight years* before it was so far completed, (still wanting spire and portico), as to be opened for public worship. The interior is handsome. The lower part is fitted up with benches for the reception of the poor; the galleries, for the sittings in which rent is paid, are pewed, and fronted with mahogany, decorated with small Doric columns. The access to the gallery is by a double geometrical staircase, with a railing of brass-work, which has a light and pleasing effect. The altar-piece consists of a painting of a cross, exhibited as appearing in the clouds; this is supported by a handsome architectural decoration of carved mahogany, of large size, containing the tablets for the decalogue, &c., presented by Mr. Stock, of Bristol; the whole enclosed in a well-turned and spacious arch. The organ, by Elliott, is a finely-toned and powerful instrument. It may be worth observing that this Church diverges from the orthodox position in reference to the Cardinal points. The chancel verges towards the *North*. This variation was peremptorily claimed by the form and situation of the ground.

The expense of erecting Christ Church was intended to have been defrayed by voluntary contributions, assisted by a donation of £1000, from the late King; the land having been presented by W. P. Inge, Esq. The cost, however, by some means, greatly outran both the estimates and the means, and part of the debts were at length closed

in a commercial way, by a *composition*. Underneath the whole are catacombs for the reception of the dead; the purchase money of these went towards the funds for the erection of the Church. The rent of the shops and store-vaults forms part of the income of the Minister.

Proceeding along Paradise-street, we pass a neat building on our left, erected for a *Meeting-house*, by a congregation whose zeal, or whose pecuniary means failed, and the place is now divided, and let for two warehouses. This street is terminated by a brick building of the most quaint and singular form, apparently constructed to show what singular effects could be produced by combinations of brick and mortar. Its design defies description; its designation is that of NAVIGATION OFFICE. It serves as a screen to the coal wharfs which lie behind it, and it is appropriated to the dispatch of business connected with the *Birmingham Canal*, which terminates here.

This canal was constructed to form a communication between Birmingham and the Collieries. At both extremities of the line, however, as well as from many intermediate points, are communications, or branches of communication with other similar works in every direction; so that merchandise is forwarded by water to every principal part of the kingdom, especially to all the great ports; thus offering the facility of transit, with comparatively light expense, to all regions of the globe. This beneficial work was commenced in 1767, under an Act of Parliament, obtained for the purpose. Its length is about twenty two miles, and the expense incurred was about £70,000, in shares of 140*l.* each. In 1811 these shares having risen to about twelve times their original value, were divided, by Act of Parliament, into half shares, and these have been since divided into quarters. Each present share is now worth about £360, or £2840 for the original share of £140.



It is worth while entering the enclosure which receives the basin of the canal, to view the constant hurry of business, and the immense quantity of coals stacked here for distribution through the town. The boats, it will be observed, are all of the same shape and size; they are made so to fit the locks, of which there are several on the canal. Each boat carries about twenty-four tons, and each is drawn, as *Hutton* sarcastically observes, "by something like the skeleton of a horse, covered with skin." Sundry *Rail Roads* centering in Birmingham, are now projected, which, if they meet the hopes and wishes of their proprietors, will at least deserve the thanks of the friends of humanity, for the reduction of brute suffering they will effect, in the decreasing number of canal-boat horses, which will attend on their completion.

Passing along to the right, by the *Wharf-wall*, our attention is called to another nondescript building, presenting several novel combinations of the circular and pointed arches, with embattled parapets and turret chimneys. This was erected by the lessee of the large plot of ground of which it occupies the eastern angle. This land, now covered by buildings and wharfs, is the site of the residence of **JOHN BASKERVILLE**, the celebrated letter-cutter and printer, who, in 1745, chose this spot, for its pleasant situation, being nearly a quarter of a mile from the town; and gave it the name of *Easy-hill*. Baskerville, born in 1706, was originally a stone-cutter; he was for some time a schoolmaster in Birmingham, and afterwards a japanner, which last was his regular occupation for life. His own taste, and the habits of his early years, led him to turn his attention to letter-cutting, and he succeeded in bringing the form of printing types to greater perfection than they had ever attained before. By this pursuit he proved his claim to the title of a man of genius; but it did not lead to wealth. After his

death, in 1775, his types and apparatus were in vain offered for sale in England, and they were at length purchased by a literary society in Paris, for £3700.

The house erected by Baskerville was afterwards inhabited and much enlarged, by the late John Ryland, Esq. His improvements were barely completed, when it was destroyed by fire, at the riots of 1791. The place lay for many years a ruin, till the whole plot of ground was taken on lease by a spirited projector, who erected a large pile of buildings in addition to what remained of the house. This is occupied by Mr. B. Cook, as a manufactory of his patent iron tubes, coated with brass. The remainder of the land is intersected by canal-branches, and covered by various commercial and manufacturing establishments.

Over the way is the EAGLE FOUNDRY, an extensive concern, where numerous articles of utility and taste are manufactured in *cast iron*; as well as heavy machinery, of which Mr. Brunton, one of the proprietors, has distinguished himself as an inventor. On the opposite side, a little further, is the Brass Foundry of Mr. Messenger, who manufactures great variety of ornamental goods. His principal articles, as chandeliers, candelabra, lamps, vases, ink-stands, &c. are eminent for their classical taste, and for the excellence of their workmanship. Here, and at the Eagle Foundry, the respectably-introduced stranger is admitted to view the operations, which will be attended with considerable gratification.

Crossing the canal, we have on our right, a large building, with ponderous square chimneys. This was erected many years ago by a public company, for the manufacture of brass, and the same concern is still beneficially carried on. Making a short turn to the left, opposite these Brass Works, we pass the Gas Light Company's establishment, with its two tall chimneys. This is on an extensive scale, but

assuredly, the lighting of the streets is, by no means, equal to that of most other towns. The distance between the lamps is very great, the flames small, and much light is lost by their being hung on brackets, projecting from the houses. This latter defect is however gradually remedying in our better streets; by the introduction of light, hollow columns of cast iron, placed on the curb-stone, and surmounted by handsome, framed lanterns. Gas is very generally used in shops, offices, and places of worship, and occasionally in private houses.

A little below, we reach the basin which forms the commencement of the Worcester canal; as well as is its junction with the old Birmingham. The scene is interesting, from the numerous wharfs and other establishments required at such a point. This canal is a fine work, having been intended for the reception of the barges and trows which ply on the river Severn. The act for cutting was obtained in 1791. The estimated cost (the distance being about thirty miles), was strangely mis-calculated at £45,000.; little less than £600,000, were, however, expended before it was completed. The first level line, uninterrupted by locks, is fourteen miles long, through an undulating line of country; a gigantic undertaking, embanked across valleys, deeply cut through eminences, and carried by subterraneous tunnels through more considerable hills. At the foot of the little eminence on which we now stand, is an ample *aqueduct*, by which the canal is carried over a road into the town. Within the first mile, is a tunnel of 110 yards long; and at King's Norton, distant six miles, is another *two miles in length*, so perfectly straight, that the observer at one end discerns the light at the opening of the other extremity. At the end of this level, at Tardebigg, the canal rapidly descends; and at that point, about the year 1810, was erected a stupendous machine, or *Lift*, for conveying loaded boats through the air,

between the upper and the lower levels, without the loss of water by means of locks. The project however, from the apprehension of accidents, was abandoned, and the canal reaches the Severn at Worcester, by means of fifty-eight locks.

Returning up *Gas-street*, we pursue our walk. Crossing Broad-street, and diverging to the right from the course of the canal, we pass the CATHOLIC CHAPEL, dedicated to St. Peter; a building of very plain exterior, but rather handsomely fitted up within. We now reach a range of neat stone-fronted houses, forming the western wing of the CRESCENT. This was, in its original design, intended to consist in its principal façade, of a range of twenty-three houses, tastefully decorated, and possessing superior accommodations. Only a small portion of the actual Crescent was however completed, when the spirit of building speculations was checked by the late war; and since that time, situations in the parish of Edgbaston and other parts have been so much preferred, that few additions have been made.

Being placed on a considerable elevation, the prospects are fine, but the houses have neither the advantages of town nor country, while they partake of the inconveniences of both; besides which, the near neighbourhood of the canal-wharfs, with all the concomitant noises, and a superabundance of vulgar language, is detrimental to the eligibility of the place as a domestic residence. The area in front is neatly railed and diversified with walks and plantations. From the west end of this area we enjoy a pleasing and lively summer-view over a considerable tract of land, laid out in small gardens. This mode of applying plots of ground, in the immediate vicinity of the town, is highly beneficial to the inhabitants. There must be some thousands of these gardens in different quarters round Birmingham, letting from 10s. 6d. to two guineas per annum. They promote healthful exercise and rational en-

joyment among the families of the artisans; and with good management, produce an ample supply of those wholesome vegetable stores, which are comparatively seldom tasted by the middling classes, when they have to be purchased. Some years ago these numerous ranges of gardens formed a feature almost peculiar to Birmingham; but latterly this profitable adaptation of ground has been practised near many other towns.

Leaving the Crescent, we take our course through Great Charles-street and Friday-street. The former of these is of great length, spacious and straight, but presenting no object of note, except the striking vista it presents over a varying surface. Getting clear of the town we reach a high embanked terrace on which stands a row of houses, some handsome, but all neat, called the Sand-pits, or Summer-hill; a pleasant and airy situation, with an extensive prospect of the adjacent country.

At the extremity of this range of houses, we turn short to the right, along Warstone-lane. We are now proceeding on the line of the ancient Icknield Street, one of the great Roman military ways, which intersected the kingdom in different directions. The course of this road is from Southampton, on the southern coast, to Tynemouth, in Northumberland; preserving its rectilinear direction, nearly unbroken, during the whole line. It enters Birmingham parish, near the tall observatory or tower,—the *Monument*, it is usually called,—which is seen southward from the spot where we now stand; and quits it at Hockley Brook, at the other end of the lane. Visible traces of this majestic work are discerned on Sutton-Coldfield, an uncultivated and desolate heath, about seven miles distant, where the vestiges may be followed for a length of three miles, in great part perfectly distinct and beautifully defined. It is probable that very few of the inhabitants of Birmingham have visited this

piece of "hoar antiquity," so near to them; which however well deserves attention, as one of the few distinctly-seen and impressive records of the ancient power of the Romans in Britain.

In the fields to the left of Warstone-lane, once stood a castle or mansion, built in the fourteenth century, by Sir Thomas de Birmingham, a brother of the then Lord of the Manor. No remains of the place are discernible, but the feeding rivulet which supplied the moat that defended it, is heard gurgling at a little distance, and flows into Hockley Pool, a large piece of water near the termination of the lane.

Our walk having been long and devious, we will now turn our faces townward; taking a turn to the right, by the extensive brewery of Messrs. Forrest; and passing through a neat suburb of new streets and single houses, which the lapse of a few years has seen rise on the summit of the hilly fields between Summer-hill and St. Paul's. The houses which advance to the front of the hill, enjoy a bold view of the western quarter of the town, including the Crescent and the neighbouring country. Some of these villas are in superior style, both as to appearance and accommodation. In this line also is placed a large octangular Chapel, erected on speculation by a Birmingham tradesman. The situation of this edifice is commanding; and a weighty portico of the Doric order gives it an imposing air; but there is a want of unity in the design, and the form of the body does not harmonise with the attached front limb. The interior, however, is fitted up with much taste and elegance. The place, from its elevated situation, was at first denominated *Zion-hill Chapel*; but being rented by a congregation over whom presided a clergyman of the Scottish Kirk, it was, in compliment to the patron of the land of thistles, denominated *St. Andrew's Church*. A disagreement having however latterly occurred be-

tween the parties ; a separation has taken place, and the Scottish Saint has quitted his residence, which has again subsided into *Zion-hill Chapel*.

The western face of the eminence on which we stand, was, some years ago, cut away, and a large space levelled, intersected by a branch from the canal, and divided into wharfs. It was the bold speculation of a single individual, but the result has been ruinous. The wharfs never having been used, lie overgrown with idle weeds, and the canal is gradually choking with rubbish.

We now arrive at *St. Paul's Chapel*. This edifice is placed advantageously on a considerable eminence. In 1779, when it was erected, it stood in the fields; there is now a town about it, and extending far beyond it. The ground was the gift of C. Colmore, Esq. Such donations, though beneficial, are not quite disinterested; for the erection of a Chapel or a Church, produces an immediate crop of houses around it, and the land, from paying an agricultural rent, is soon many times doubled in value, by being let by the yard, and paying a building rent. The body of *St. Paul's chapel* is rather heavy in its form, and in the cumbrous style of the ornaments which prevail; but the steeple, which has lately been added, is light and elegant in the extreme. It is one of those few instances, in which an artist has succeeded in the elevation of a spire supported by, and gracefully combining with a series of lower members of Grecian character. The architect was Francis Goodwyn, Esq. whose knowledge of Gothic architecture is evinced in the erection of *Trinity Church*, which will be noticed in its place. Over the communion table of this Chapel is a large painted window, by the late Francis Eginton;—the subject, the Conversion of *St. Paul*. This, as a picture, possesses considerable merit, and when seen under favourable circumstances of light, has a striking effect. Its cost was about four hundred guineas.

Reaching for a short distance to the right from St. Paul's, we turn into Newhall-street, a broad and airy street, leading in a direct line for the centre of the town. At about the middle of its length, and facing directly up the way, stood a large and old mansion, the seat of the *Colmore family*, called *New-Hall*, whence the name of the street. This was removed about the year 1783. In this central part of Newhall-street are the extensive offices and wharfs of the Birmingham Coal Company; a little beyond are two Dissenting Places of Worship, one attended by a small congregation of the followers of Emanuel Count Swedenbourg; and called the *New Jerusalem Temple*; the other by a branch Society of Calvinistic Baptists, separated from the parent-stock in Cannon-street.

It seems rather a curious circumstance that on a considerable swell in the street, at the crossing of Great Charles-street, the houses should be still more elevated, by being approached by flights of ten or fifteen steps. This has been occasioned by the hasty planning of streets, without regard to the section of the ground. These houses were erected on the unaltered surface, which it afterwards became absolutely necessary to lower, in order to render the street which crossed the first line, practicable.

Attaining the upper end of Newhall-street, we enjoy a fine view of the Western front of St. Philip's Church, but we defer any examination of the building till our next walk. Should our arrival at this spot happen at the favourable hour of a ruddy sun-set, the effect on the fine tower and dome of the church, and on the minor surrounding objects, is very beautiful.

The line of street which meets Newhall-street at right angles, is the place occupied as the stand for *Cars* drawn by one horse, which were introduced into Birmingham five or six years ago, and of



which there are now several. They are neat and commodious vehicles, of various constructions, but all having four wheels; generally respectably fitted up, and the horses, passable. Their hire is rather cheaper than that of the hackney coaches.

This part of the town has lately witnessed great alterations. The old and poor buildings which formed the South-eastern side of Ann-street have been removed, the surface of the street lowered, and the ground between Ann-street and New-street, which had been occupied only by gardens, laid out for building on. It is made a condition, by the proprietor of the land, that all houses or other erections shall be of stone, or coated with its semblance, Roman cement. Several decorated edifices have already appeared, and ground is taken for others. Among the completed or nearly-completed specimens are the Egypto-Doric of the Brades Co. steel warehouse; a tomb-stone-topped *depot* for crown glass; and the NEWS AND COMMERCIAL ROOM; the latter in the yet unnamed street opened from Newhall-street end, to New-street. This News-room is the property of a company of share-holders, and will be completed for about £2500. The exterior, when it has received its decorations, will be ornamental; the fitting up of the interior, elegant and commodious; and the institution amply supplied with commercial and literary periodical reading.

A new Edition, should one be called for, of this little work, may probably contain descriptions of other public or private buildings, of some architectural pretensions, filling up the still vacant ground in this neighbourhood. At present, our day's work is closed; the unnamed street in which we stand terminates at the Post Office, "which see." Here then we re-enter New-street, and vanish from the side of our companion, proposing a meeting for to-morrow; on the spot from which we commenced the ramble of to-day.

## THE SECOND OR NORTH-WESTERN WALK.

Meeting at the former chosen spot,—the east end of New-street, we will now turn our faces the contrary way from the commencement of our yesterday's excursion. Our course lies at present up High-street ;—the *High Town*, as its locality has caused it to be sometimes designated. This is a busy street, garnished with handsome shops, well displayed, in various retail lines, and for whose prime situations the occupiers, as may be supposed, pay smartly.

Leaving this lively scene, however, we soon turn off to the left, up Union-street; a line of communication with St. Philip's Church-Yard, and all the upper parts of the town. This was opened about thirty-five years ago, before which time there was only a zig-zag passage for pedestrians, called Corbett's Alley. The houses are all fronted with stone, but unfortunately their effect is injured by the narrowness of the street. The truth is, the plot of ground wanted space properly to allow of a double row of houses, and in persisting to make this arrangement, the appearance of the street, and the accommodation of its inhabitants, are sacrificed.

A little way up, on the right hand, is a building of curious design ;—the DISPENSARY. In fabricating the front of this edifice, the artist has wantonly violated correctness, and has needlessly run into preposterous inventions. We say *needlessly*, because at the time when this was erected, there were so few specimens of architectural skill in the town, that mere *novelty* in the decorative part was uncalled for, and the canons of ancient art might have contented the most ingenious designer, and the most critical committee of proprietors. Now indeed, the case is altered, and it is not to be wondered at, if

the great calls for variety lead to occasional fantasiae. Over the entrance-door of this building is a sculpture, fit company for such architecture; wherein a female figure sits crouching under the oppression of an arch; bearing in her hand a cup of medicine, which she is probably on the point of taking herself, or of administering to some unseen patient;—*which*, is uncertain, nor is it elucidated by the inscription.

Whatever defect however may attach to the exterior of this building, its object and the mode of its conduct deserve, as far as a human institution can, unqualified praise; its intention is to afford gratuitous medical relief to the sick poor, which is effected by voluntary subscriptions of one and two guineas per annum; assisted by occasional donations and bequests. Each subscriber of one guinea has four tickets annually (and so in proportion to larger subscriptions), which he distributes to persons whose cases come under his own observation, or that of his friends. The patients present themselves for advice, at the Dispensary, or are attended at their own houses by the resident surgeon of the institution; assisted, when necessary, by some of the most eminent established medical men, who voluntarily give their assistance, in aid of the good work. It is probable that a greater mass of beneficial effect is produced by this Dispensary, in proportion to its means, than by any other institution, whose object is, the charitable relief of human suffering from sickness. The extent of its good effects may be gathered from the following memorandum, selected from the reports:—

#### PATIENTS RELIEVED.

	Sick.	Midwifery.	Inoculation. Small Pox. Vaccine.
In 1794	212	40	28
1804	1145	180	675
1814	2051	355	767
1824	2042	558	1118

The expenditure of the last reported year was £840; and the income £854. The institution was established in 1793, and the present building erected in 1806.

A little beyond, on the opposite side, is the FIRE OFFICE, a building of considerable elegance, consisting of a solid basement, from which rise pilasters of the Ionic order, surmounted by an Attic. The Company was formed in 1806, and is very prosperous. From the nature of the building materials used in Birmingham, there are comparatively few accidents or injuries by fire, although that element is so copiously employed in every manufacture.

In the immediate vicinity of the Fire Office, is the BIRMINGHAM or *Old LIBRARY*; so called, in contradistinction from a later establishment of a similar nature. The exterior is tasteful, consisting of a curved portico, supported by two pair of coupled columns of the Doric order, surmounted by an Ionic story of the same form. The aspect of the interior is lofty, handsome and commodious. This Library was first projected in 1779, but received its more complete regulations, form, and stability, in 1782, from the late Dr. Priestley, then a resident in this town. The subscription has gradually increased with the increasing numbers of subscribers, from six shillings to one pound per annum. At present, the number of subscribers is upwards of five hundred, and the number of volumes nearly 16,000. A collection, which whether for copiousness, variety, or utility, is equalled by very few belonging to similar establishments in the kingdom.\*

Nearly opposite to the Library is a small irregular plot of ground, at present vacant, which being lately divided into building lots, and sold by auction, brought the extraordinary price of four to five guineas the square yard. Abutting on this

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\* The Fire Office and Library, form No. 3, of our Views.

ground, but with its front placed towards an arm of Cherry-street, will be observed a large and neat brick building,—the *Meeting-house* of the WESLEYAN METHODISTS. This increasing sect first occupied an obscure place in Steelhouse-lane; from thence they migrated to the Old Theatre in Moor-street, where they continued till 1782, when a place of worship on the spot now before us, was completed, and opened by the celebrated and truly excellent John Wesley. Since that time, several minor places have been erected in different parts of the town; and the parent chapel not being sufficiently spacious for its regularly assembling congregation, has been lately much enlarged, and the interior completely renewed. Its decorations, internally, are gay and lively in the extreme, almost every order of architecture being pressed into the service; with a profusion of foliage and other plaster-work on the ceiling, and in different parts.

We now reach the principal architectural ornament of the town; ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH.\* This well-proportioned pile is placed on an eminence, from whence the streets descend in almost every direction. The church-yard is a fine open space, of four acres in area; which permits the edifice which occupies and adorns its centre, to be advantageously viewed from every point. It is intersected in various directions by walks, for approach, and is surrounded by an avenue or rather *double row* of somewhat stunted lime trees, which, however, give it a cheerful appearance. Unfortunately the general aspect is injured by the circumstance of the ichnography of the Church not ranging in parallel lines with any of the buildings around it. This is occasioned by the attachment of the founder, commissioners, or architect, to the *East*, towards

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\* See our *fourth* view, in which the Blue Coat School is seen on the left, and the Hotel on the right of the Church.

2



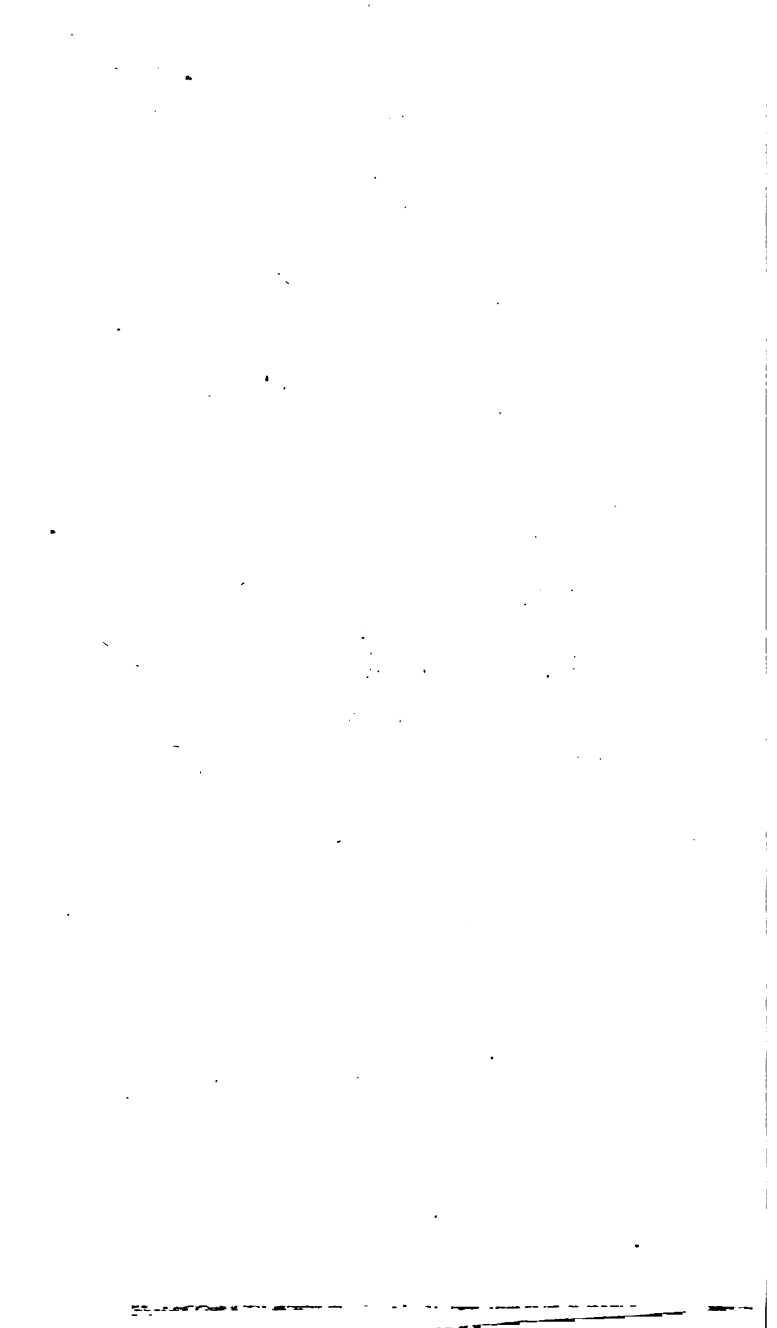
5



6



4 St. Philip's Church—5 Temple Row West—6 New Meeting.



which point the chancel of the Church is technically turned. For our own parts, however, though we regret that such a defect should exist here, we are strongly disposed to favour the custom of placing some particular species of building, common to all towns;—the Church for instance,—wherever it can be done; in *one position* in relation to the Cardinal points. Not from any imagination of religious injunction, or of peculiar sanctity attached to one point, but as a matter of convenience, to have in every place, some correct standard of reference to these points. Some situations, peculiarly eligible, will not with any propriety admit of this location, which must then be resigned, as was properly done at Christ Church. After all, perhaps it was wise to make this precise position, originally, a matter of religious duty, in order to ensure attention to it.

The form of St. Philip's Church is pleasing, viewed at either end. Its architectural character is *Doric*; consisting of a pedestal line of good height, a range of lofty pilasters enclosing the large and well-formed windows; and a handsome balustrade, with urns over each of the pilasters. The sweeping curve of the chancel is graceful; and at the opposite end is a substantial square projection, from which rises the tower, of peculiarly elegant design; adorned by Corinthian pilasters, carried upwards by a well-arranged series of curved figures, enclosing the clock-faces; above which rises a lead-covered dome of moderate magnitude, crowned by a light lantern cupola, which tapers off into the ball and vane. The effect of the whole figure is strikingly beautiful. Perhaps the only architectural defect of moment is the making the tower rise from the unsteady foundation of a circular pediment. The interior of the Church is of a nature to correspond with the expectations raised by the exterior. The lofty columns supporting the roof;



the paintings, gildings, and carvings; the enriched work of the chancel; the powerful organ; are all superb and appropriate, without being chargeable with the defects of meretricious ornament. The only exceptions to this commendatory character, are two painted windows lately inserted at the eastern end. The work of these consists merely of a gay and flowery *carpet pattern*, with gorgeous borders of foliage, glowing in the hues of sun-set, and varied only by the introduction of the arms of the then Rector and Bishop. The spectator is at a loss to conceive the motive for spending money in such toys. They are perfectly meaningless; they are as unsatisfactory even to the eye, as they are discrepant from every other object within the august edifice which they disfigure. *Printed calico* would have answered every purpose of utility as *blinds*, and been much cheaper.

The plans and elevations of this Church were furnished by an ancestor of the family of Lord Archer; the ground whereon it stands was the gift of Robert Philips Inge, Esq. who chose a saint of his own name, to preside over the Church, and to perpetuate the memory of the donation. It was commenced building in the year 1711, and completed in 1719. The stone which was used in the work is of very bad quality, and is in every part decaying and crumbling away. The whole of the pedestal range has been covered and restored by means of Roman cement, a repair which in that part was become absolutely necessary.

In this Church are performed the Oratorios, and other sacred pieces, at the grand Musical Festival, held triennially, for the benefit of the General Hospital, and for the delight of the lovers of harmony and splendour. On these occasions, the assemblage within the building is of the very first degree for throng and for fashionable display, while the crowded lines of carriages attending without the gates are

almost unrivalled ; and the idlers of the town enjoy a complete jubilee of amusing gaze at the ornamental bustle, the elegant crowds, and the brilliant equipages. These Festivals will occupy more of our attention when we arrive at the *Hospital*.

For the objects of note which surround the Church-Yard, the principal is the Blue Coat Charity School, which occupies a large portion of the Eastern side. This is an unpretending but very neat stone edifice, whose only actual ornaments are statues over the entrance, representing a boy and girl, in the dresses of the School. These are distinguished for unaffected simplicity of attitude and deportment, unaccompanied by that air of stiffness and formality which some artists have so well known how to infuse into *images* of this description ; and with which committees and governors are too apt to be easily contented. The name of the sculptor was Grubb, who practised his art in this town.

This School was founded in 1724, by subscriptions and donations of the inhabitants, when a very plain brick building was erected ; but it was much enlarged and its appearance totally altered in 1794, when it received its present front. Late improvements have extended the uniformity of aspect, round the north angle, which, till within two years, retained the original and comparatively mean appearance. The building is well contrived and airy ; the School Rooms lofty and spacious. Behind the house is an open area used as play-ground. The number of children clothed and educated is about 110 boys and 50 girls ; who receive instructions in all necessary and useful branches of knowledge, befitting their stations ; and qualifying them respectively, for manufacturing and commercial situations, and for domestic servants. They are clothed in uniform suits of blue ; except a few of either sex, who may be observed habited in *green* ; these are supported by a competent portion of funds, left in 1712, by

George Fentham, for the purpose of educating a certain number of poor children, and for the maintenance of poor widows in Birmingham.

The substantial dwelling-house nearly adjoining, is the Rectory. The living is a valuable one; a portion of the parish of St. Martin's having been constituted a separate parish, on the erection of Saint Philip's, to which are added a prebendal stall in Lichfield Cathedral, and estates in various situations. One of the wings attached to this residence has been appropriated to the reception of a THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY, bequeathed by the first Rector, the Rev. W. Higgs, for the use of the clergy of the town and neighbourhood.

Turning the corner of the Rectory house, it will be remarked that the flags of the causeway, for a few yards, are of a different colour and consistency from those in other parts. They are of a species of cement or composition, laid down about three years ago, as a trial; they appear to answer their introduction, in a much-frequented point of thoroughfare, extremely well; and if they have the recommendation of cheapness, might be used to advantage, where the proper stone is not easily obtained.

The broken line which bounds the whole southern half of the Church-yard, is at present termed *Temple-row*, and contains several objects worthy of note. Of these, the first is the ROYAL HOTEL, erected in 1772, on a tontine subscription. In this Hotel is the *Assembly and Concert Room*; a large and lofty apartment, with a sufficient orchestra, and decorated in middling style. The access is by a broad and handsome flight of stairs at the extremity of the entrance hall. There is a considerable prevalence of musical taste in Birmingham. The subscriptions to these Concerts are always full, and many names are constantly on the lists to be balloted for, as vacancies occur. There are usually three or four Concerts in the course of the winter, which are of high cha-

acter, for the talent engaged in their performance. The assemblies for dancing are not so well supported, and various plans have at different times been tried to keep them *genteel*, and at the same time to prevent them from flagging; but with indifferent success.

From the Hotel to Temple-street, extends a line of respectable brick houses, built soon after the Church; but from this point to the end of Temple-row, the buildings are of a superior cast. They are newly-erected; part not yet completed, all of them coated with cement, and rendered in a greater or less degree, ornamental. A newly-opened street across Mr. Inge's ground, affords a good prospect of the eastern end of Christ Church; it is a pity that it is, on this side, so little worth seeing. We regret to observe, in a group of houses in this quarter, and again in the News Room, a prevailing taste for *attached columns*, and *semicircular pilasters*. Both these we consider as bad. The complete column, wherever adopted, should be at some distance from the wall, to show that it is *of use*. In the case before us, the *quiescent* character of the column is evinced by the introduction of strong square piers for the *actual* support of the building. The pilaster, we prefer of a rectangular section. It is a purely *ornamental* addition to a building, and the square figure is by far the most effectual for providing those delicate *sketchings* of shadowy lines, which have so pleasing an effect. Semicircular pilasters produce meagre and ill-defined shadows, and a range of columns adhering to the wall, only produces waste of room. A great deal of misconception and false taste in building arise from considering architecture as a merely decorative science; from losing sight of the fact, that the primary intention of each order and its divisions was actual support to the building it adorned.

The varied group of building next in course has a very pleasing and picturesque aspect. Its corres-

pendent portions, right and left from the centre, being nearly uniform;\* the central object being the **NEW LIBRARY**, which was established in 1796. This Library was originally deposited in an obscure situation in Cannon-street, where it remained, till the erection of the edifice before us, in 1821. The collection of books is now respectable, and is continually increasing by judicious purchases. The subscription is the same as that of the Old Library. The building was erected on the tontine principle, and within is well adapted to the purpose of its destination. Its exterior is peculiar and novel in design, but tasteful; especially when considered in connexion with the houses immediately adjoining. Receding from the line of the neighbouring building, it adds to the general effect of the whole.

Two doors from the Library is the office of the **BIRMINGHAM MINING and COPPER COMPANY**, established in 1790, for the purpose of supplying the manufacturers with copper; the Company having erected Works at Swansea, for smelting the ore. This concern soon promised so well, that others, under the titles of the *Crown*, the *Rose*, and the *Union Companies*, sprang up to share in the expected profits of the trade. The result however showed that the market might be overstocked, and the Mining and the Crown only have continued till the present day, to tell the tale of their vicissitudes.

Leaving St. Philip's Church-yard, we turn into Church-street; near this end of which, on the left hand, is a long range of buildings, whose pediments are adorned by certain sculptures, the principal of which, is an attempt at a copy of the celebrated *Horses of Lysippus*, which grace the palace of St. Mark, at Venice. The building so distinguished, is the extensive **MANUFACTORY and SNOW-ROOMS** of Mr. THOMASON. This establishment is an epi-

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\* See Number 5 of the Views.

some of Birmingham, and claims attention accordingly. The *work-shops* of Mr. Thomason combine a great variety of operations in the metallic arts, and are open to the inspection of respectable strangers. To *residents* in Birmingham, the access is more difficult; we understand, however, that, provided they be unconnected with manufacturing pursuits, such persons are, on special introduction, occasionally admitted. The *show-rooms* are open to all, to view and to purchase, without distinction. They are profusely supplied with all that can be conceived of elegance and magnificence, in jewelry, plate, and plated goods, medals, cutlery, japan wares, &c. The rooms are several in number, but perhaps this circumstance renders the well-arranged and immensely-varied display, more surprising than if all were at once exhibited in one spacious room or gallery. The Prince of interesting objects in this repository, is a beautiful *fac-simile* of the fine antique BACCHANALIAN VASE, presented by Sir W. Hamilton to the late Earl of Warwick, and by him placed in the conservatory, at Warwick Castle. The admirable forms are imitated with great skill and precision; the colouring, given by different processes of oxydation, is striking and appropriate; and the whole is highly creditable to the taste and spirit of Mr. Thomason, who undertook this very considerable work, merely as a matter of exhibition, and to give an idea of the state of the arts in Birmingham. Mr. T. has also lately succeeded in making a bronze cast, from a statue of his present Majesty, of the size of life, which is also exhibited in one of the rooms.

Taking the first turn to the right, we cross Livery-street, where, at a little distance, we perceive a lumbering mass of brick-work, originally designed for an Amphitheatre, for the exhibition of equestrian shows. It is now, like the two Theatres before-

mentioned, converted into a Dissenting Place of Worship. Such a conversion of *three* places of public amusement, in this town, is rather a curious circumstance. The cases, however, are not quite parallel; the Theatres were *to be let*, on account of the erection of superior ones; but the occupation of the Amphitheatre seemed gone for ever;—nor is such an establishment likely to be wanted again in its original capacity, since the introduction of quadrupeds on the regular stage.

Passing along Brittle-street, we enter *Snowhill*, a wide street on a declivity, the road out of town to Wolverhampton. From this part of it, we enjoy a good view of St. George's Church, erected a few years ago, at the north-western extremity of the town. A little below us is a public **WEIGHING MACHINE**; the house attached to which is built entirely of *cast-iron*, architecturally adorned with pilasters. This is very well, as the material takes up very little room, and the space allotted was extremely confined. These pilasters, however, have no ostensible functions to perform in reference to the building, being only, as we have observed in another case, pedestals or supports to some allegorical figures. These latter are of the same durable material with the house, and all from the same mould. They testify the virtue of Justice, and emblemize the machinery over which they preside. The artist, in affixing these, went for too much;—they are an ugly sisterhood; such fopperies as these no public body should sanction. Several Steam Engines are here seen in the adjacent streets, which, by the provisions of the *Birmingham Street Act* (62 Geo. 3d. s. 42), are enjoined to consume their own smoke, under certain penalties in case of failure. This injunction is obeyed by these Engines,—much as it is by others in different parts of the town.

On Constitution-hill (which rises before us),

stands an extensive manufactory of *Papier Machée*, conducted by Messrs. Jennens and Bettridge, where works of great taste and elegance are produced. This is a species of work in which, by common consent, all rules of art, all teachings of nature, are set at nought. A new and gorgeous world is opened before the practitioner, who revels in the fabrication, and delights us by the display, of beautiful, but wild, grotesque, and dreamy forms, aerial castles, fairy vegetation, glowing in all the brilliant variety of metallic tints. The ingenious operations and the finished specimens are no where more completely and pleasingly displayed, than in the manufactory and show-rooms now before us.

Great Hampton-street, which succeeds, is a wide, untidy-looking, irregular range of middling houses; but at the farthest end, an interesting prospect presents itself, over a well-varied country. Immediately in front, are the grounds of *Soho*, long well known as the residence of the late Matthew Boulton, Esq. who found this domain almost a barren waste, and in a few years covered it with finely-diversified pleasure grounds and plantations, and erected a splendid mansion, and an immense pile of workshops, which latter are, by the skilful management of the ground and trees, almost concealed from observation. Mr. Boulton's manufacturing speculations gradually increased with his increasing means of supporting them; till his establishment was probably unequalled by any other in the world. Several newly-invented styles of metallic ornament were introduced by him, to which were added the manufacture of wrought-plate and plated wares; the coining mill, capable of striking between thirty and forty thousand pieces in an hour; and above all, the manufacture of Steam Engines, which were brought to perfection by his partner, the justly-celebrated James Watt. For his improvements, a patent was obtained, which was renewed by Act of Parliament, in 1775.



It were easy to fill several pages with an account of Mr. Boulton's undertakings, and a description of his processes, but such lengthened narration would be out of place here, and the foregoing few lines will suffice to give an idea of what the Soho is. The doors of the various manufactories are, we believe, closed against every visitant, unless under very peculiar circumstances; but there are, we believe, show-rooms constantly open for those who choose to go so far for the sight and purchase of manufactured articles.

Looking to the right we have a view of the handsome suburb of rows and detached houses, stretching out to a distance of two miles from the town, and advancing far into the parish of Handsworth; the eye also ranges over a considerable extent of country on this side, including *Barr Beacon*, the woods of *Aston Park*, with the spire of the *Church*, and other objects. In a pleasant valley, to the left, stands a dark-coloured dwelling, antiquated by a coating of slags and scorïæ; this, by its contriver, was called *Hockley Abbey*, but it is much better known by the characteristic title of the *Cinder House*. Near this are two tolerable sheets of water called *Hockley pools*, and above it is the bulky cone of a *Glass House*, on *Birmingham Heath*.

In returning, we will quit the main street to pass by the new Church of *St. George*, lately erected in the open fields, but already surrounded by a growing town. The Church is in the Gothic taste, full of neatly-arranged and well-finished detail, both within and without; but common-place in its contour, and presenting no features of originality in combination, or boldness of design.

From hence, proceeding along *Tower-street*, our view is terminated by a large building, ornamented with cupolas, and its front distinguished by a range of columns more useless than those of *Carlton House*, which have caused so many jokes: for these

are entirely without entablature. The building was erected for a public Brewery;—the *Britannia*. It is now occupied by the works of various mechanical experimentalists; of these a manufactory of *cut Nails* is the principal; there is also established or establishing a *Printing concern*, on a new and ingenious plan, calculated to execute a vast quantity of work in a short time; while the work of the compositor is to be lessened, and the beauty of the execution increased by the novel and bold plan of constantly *casting new types instead of distributing those which have been used!* A Mr. CHURCH is the inventor of this extraordinary process.

Tower-street brings us into Summer-lane, near to the GENERAL HOSPITAL, a neat, extensive, and substantial building, in an airy situation, conveniently contrived for the reception of a large number of patients. This building was commenced in 1766, under the auspices and superintendence of Dr. Ash, an eminent Physician of Birmingham; but was stopped for twelve years for want of funds. At the expiration of this term the matter was revived; subscriptions were rapidly collected, and the edifice finished in 1779, at the cost of £7137. The current expenses of this noble institution are supported by annual subscriptions, assisted by frequent bequests and donations; and by the large sums produced by the grand Triennial MUSICAL FESTIVAL. These festivals were commenced a few years after the completion of the Hospital; and for admirable management, judicious selection of performers and of pieces, and liberality and extent of arrangements, have stood far above every similar Meeting in the kingdom, till the last year or two, when they may have been rivalled by the performances of York and Liverpool. The conduct of the Festivals has been for many years undertaken by Mr. Joseph Moore, to whose laudable exertions,

and skill in selecting and combining musical talent, much of their great celebrity may safely be ascribed. The friends of the institution expressed the sense of their obligation, a few years ago, to Mr. Moore, by the presentation of a handsome and valuable service of plate, suitably inscribed. The Festivals last for four days. The sacred music, as has been observed, is performed in the morning of each day at St. Philip's Church, and there is a miscellaneous concert, or a dress ball, each evening at the Theatre. The net produce has gradually and constantly increased; that of the meeting of 1823 was upwards of £5000. the gross receipts being about £11,000.

Taking a course along Summer-lane, Snowhill, and Bath-street, we pass by the end of Shadwell-street, where a few years ago, was erected another Chapel for Roman Catholic Worship. It is dedicated to a Welch or Saxon Saint, of the name of *Chad*. We next find ourselves standing before ST. MARY'S CHAPEL, an unadorned edifice, of an octangular form, rather dark from the smallness of its windows, and having, attached to one of its sides, a circular projection, bearing a diminutive extinguisher-looking excrescence, by way of steeple. The benefactress was Mrs. Mary Weaman, who presented the ground, in the centre of which it is placed, in 1774, and, according to the custom of the place, selected a patroness whose name should perpetuate the donor's munificence.

This is a very busy part of the town, abounding in manufactories of jewellery, gift toys, and other light articles; also of fire arms. The latter arose from the circumstance of the only public *Proof House* being long situated in Lancaster-street, at a short distance, northward, from this point. In this direction, and stretching far out to the right, till they meet the Lichfield Road, is an extensive mass of buildings, of comparatively late erection; but as

among so many streets, there are no objects worthy of particular notice, we shall content ourselves with stating the fact of the magnitude of this division of the town, without urging any research into its particulars.

Proceeding up Loveday-street, we reach *Steel-house-lane*; we allude to the name only for the sake of observing that it was derived from the circumstance of the first *Steel-house* or furnace for converting iron into steel, being erected in this situation,—then the *outside of the town*. This was at the close of the seventeenth, or the beginning of the following century. The art of making steel was introduced here by a person of the name of Kettle.

On our entrance into this street, we find ourselves nearly opposite to a tall, dismal-looking pile of smoky brick building. This is the back of the PARISH POOR-HOUSE, and a little curve to the left and right, brings us to its front, in Lichfield-street. There is nothing interesting as a work of art in the design of this building; and this is as it should be; all unnecessary expense here would be waste,—absurd and prodigal. It is extensive, to suit the magnitude of the town, and its interior is well-arranged. The establishment of Workhouses did not, till after a long time had elapsed, succeed the enactment of the Poor Laws. That before us, was not erected till 1733. Its first plan included the central part only; the wings, one used as a *Town Infirmary*, and the other as a *place of labour*; were not added till many years after. The affairs of the house are managed by twelve *Overseers*, of whom half the number are annually chosen; and by the body of *Guardians of the Poor*, consisting of 108 inhabitants, who are elected triennially. The necessary funds for the current expenditure are raised, as usual, by town levies. In Hutton's History of Birmingham, is given an interesting document, containing an account of the Parish Disbursements for

the Poor of Birmingham, for nearly every year since 1675. The following are a few of the progressive sums ;—

A.D. 1676	£338	A.D. 1790	£16,035
1700	664	1806	19,136
1739	678	1810	21,856
1750	1167	1815	55,674
1781	11,606	1818	61,928

The last-mentioned year will be long remembered by the whole country, as the time of the heaviest demands. There have been occasionally nearly 1000 paupers in the house, and 5600 upon the books as out-poor.

Besides this extensive Workhouse, there is a convenient and well-managed *Asylum*, at the edge of the town, in Summer-lane, for the reception of the children of the poor, and where four hundred have been occasionally sheltered at once. This excellent addition to the Parish institutions, was established in 1797, and its effects are highly beneficial. Every thing is done which can administer to the reasonable comfort of the young and helpless inmates, who are fed, clothed, and educated ; and all who are able, set to work in a moderate degree ; and by good management, the produce of their labours, in the manufacture of pins, straw-plat, &c. has been made very considerable.

Leaving the Workhouse, we shall take the first turn to the right into Steelhouse-lane again, in order to pass by a large Meeting House of the Independents, a separation from the congregation of Carr's-lane, which has received the scriptural appellation of *Ebenezer*. It is a well-built, but unadorned structure ; in front is placed a monument to the memory of the late respectable minister, the Rev. J. Brewer. A little beyond we make a return to the left, down the *Upper Priory*, which brings us to the *Square* ; one of the earliest attempts at a decorative location of the buildings. It is of mo-

derate size; the houses which compose its sides respectable; and a circular portion of the area is enclosed by iron railing, and planted with shrubs. The spot is interesting to the antiquarian, as being the centre of the fine enclosure of fourteen acres, which belonged to the *Priory* or Hospital of St. Thomas the Apostle.

Through the *Minories* we proceed to *Bull-street*, where, looking to the right, we perceive a plain, unwindowed, barn-like edifice; the meeting house of the "People called Quakers;" here a tolerably numerous, a very respectable, and a thriving sect. About half-way down the street, near Number 27, stood the Chapel of the Priory, and nearly opposite flourished the old Red Bull Inn, on the "Wolverhampton Road." From these two opponent edifices the street acquired, and bore for a considerable time, the double name of *Bull-street*, and *Chapel-street*. The old Inn, however, stood the longest, and carried the votes of the town in its favour.

We are now in the high tide of retail trade, which continues to the end of our walk, and far beyond. From the farther parts of Bull-street, and of Dale-End, down to the lower extremity of High-street, the sides have long-formed lines, almost unbroken, of shops; but late years and increasing demand have brought great part of New-street into requisition, as well as almost the whole of Digbeth, and portions of other streets connected with these. The shops of the higher degrees, are very handsomely fitted up; the form and sweep of the windows, and the style of the decorations, emulating those of the Metropolis.

Peeping as we pass along, into the gay depositories of elegance and fashion, and into the well-stocked marts for articles of utility, we shortly arrive at the spot from whence we commenced our circuit, and where we bring it to a termination.

### THE THIRD OR NORTH-EASTERN WALK.

It were worth while for once, during the stranger's continuance in Birmingham, to turn out rather early in the morning, to watch the starting of the numerous Stage Coaches, which leave the various Inns of New-street and High-street, at about eight o'clock, or a little before. The London day Coaches, those admirable combinations of speed and punctuality, by which the traveller—if the season be not earlier or later than the term bounded by the equinoxes,—may see the light of the same day in Birmingham and in London;—these have got under way, some an hour, some (for there are several) two hours ago.

This is a locomotive community;—one would imagine that the population of whole towns was perpetually migrating. Who that calls to mind the two or three night, or rather *night and day* coaches, which, on the first of this century, travelled at a moderate pace, to and from London; would have conceived it possible that they should, in so short a time, have multiplied to at least *twenty*, running daily on the same route, with vastly increased speed?

Casting our eyes into New-street, we perceive the fronts of the Swan, and Hen and Chickens, encumbered with well-built vehicles, generally excellently *horsed*, and destined for Bristol, Bath, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, and Shrewsbury; some of them Mails, and others Stage Coaches. The street is kept in a constant bustle by the degree of apparent confusion which attends the general departure, and the apportioning of passengers and luggage to each conveyance. A short remove brings us to the Castle Inn, where the same scene is re-

peating; and similar active exertions are taking place, at the Albion, and at the Saracen's Head, up Bull-street.

What we have here described, to be seen in perfection, must be the object of a short stroll out, before breakfast; but there are perpetual arrivals and departures during the day. Proceeding afterwards at a more suitable hour, on our walk, we again pace the upper part of High-street.

Supposing the day to be Friday, we will turn down a shabby, narrow passage, encumbered with orange boxes, packing casks, and baskets of wares of various descriptions. At the end of this passage, in a building, which was once a dwelling-house of the first order, but which is now consigned to neglect and decay, we shall find the COURT OF REQUESTS assembled for the dispatch of business.

This Court was established for the summary recovery of debts under forty shillings, by an Act of Parliament, passed in 1752; and by another Act of 1808, its powers were extended to debts under five pounds. The sittings were originally held in the chamber over the Old Cross, till its destruction in 1784. The Commissioners forming the Court of Requests, are seventy-two in number, of whom three are a quorum. Once in two years, ten of them are balloted out, and ten other inhabitants chosen in their stead. The number of cases decided in one day, is not unfrequently two hundred; two sets of Commissioners sitting at the same time, for division of labour. The decisions of this Court are final, and where so much business is dispatched, it is no small matter of praise, if all be done agreeably to the demands of justice, and uninfluenced by partiality or impatience. The Commissioners are but men, and stout swearing in such processes has been known to assist in bolstering an unjust claim.

We now pursue our way, leaving this scene of argument and discord. At the spot where Bull-



street and Dale-End meet High-street, formerly stood the **WELCH CROSS**, so called from its situation, which once bore the name of the *Welch End*. This building, like the *Old Cross*, was an indifferent attempt at an accommodation for market people; consisting of a small square space, open on all sides, and covered by a single chamber, supported by heavy square piers. The chamber was appropriated to the purpose of a military guard-house. The whole building, being an incumbrance in such a thoroughfare, was removed in 1803, after standing about a century. There was, in truth, no reason for permitting so unornamental an appendage to remain, except that, had as it was, it was the only apology for market accommodation, provided by the town.

We proceed along Dale-end, where, till a few years ago, the **Beast Market** was held; whose broad left causeway is still the scene of a daily vegetable market; and whose whole length is, at Whitsuntide and Michaelmas, still encumbered and choked up by one half the crowds, the shows, and the fun of the fairs. On the right hand is a large space cleared of buildings; this was to have been the seat of a new Church, but proper inquiries having been made, *after* the houses had been destroyed, it was found that some parochial obstacle to the proposed erection existed, which has not been yet surmounted. At the termination of Dale-end, near the opening of Stafford-street, stood another cross, (as appears by the plan of Birmingham in 1731) of the antique fashion, composed of two or three circular steps, surmounted by a column of moderate height; of the removal of this we have not discovered the record.

In this excursion, we have to pass through long streets, unmarked by objects of ornament, and barren of interest. Of this kind are Coleshill-street, and Ashsted. The former claims only the ignoble celebrity of being annually the scene of especial noise, intemperance, and *Chapel Wake*; the latter

is a considerable Hamlet, which owed its existence chiefly to the establishment of a Chapel there. This was originally a house, built for his own residence by Dr. Ash, whose name has been mentioned in connexion with the Hospital, and whose portrait, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, ornaments one of the rooms of that institution. This house was purchased by a Birmingham attorney, who converted it into a Place of Worship for the established religion, dedicating it to St. James; and the nascent suburb, borrowing its appellation of Ashsted, from the name of its original proprietor, rapidly increased in magnitude.

Close to the Chapel-yard stand the BARRACKS, erected in the year 1793, agreeably to the fashion of the time. They cover an area of five acres, and are capable of accommodating 162 men and their horses. They are built on ground held on a lease of only eighty years, at a cost of £13,000. The economy of these establishments is well illustrated by the caustic Hutton, who, on fair grounds of calculation, shows that the mere *lodging* of each man costs the country eleven pence per night, exclusive of food or firing.

At a small distance, outward, is VAUXHALL, once a place of considerable public resort, but now deserted as unfashionable. This was originally called Duddeston, and for many ages was successively a residence of the Saxon Lords of Dudley Castle (whence its name of *Dud's Town*) of the Paganalls, Bottetourts, Erdingtons, Maidenhaches, and Holts. It received its present title, when converted into a place of entertainment, in imitation of the London resort of gaiety and pleasure. Exhibitions of fireworks, and middling musical performances, are held during the summer months; and our artizans are invited to the spot at sundry times during the practicable season, to partake of the alluring pastime of "dancing on the green." There is an air of elderly

respectability about the place, but without any visible remains of the more *ancient* buildings. The situation, until invaded by the approaches of the town, must have been delightful; the grounds, if fashion permitted, are still worthy of notice, being laid out with considerable taste, into lawns and walks, and adorned with some tolerable timber.

At a small distance from Vauxhall, are a handsome house and extensive pleasure grounds, the residence of Samuel Galton, Esq. Banker, of Birmingham, who has chosen for its designation *part* of the original orthography of the seat of the Holts. This modern mansion is called and spelt *Dudson*. To those who have any penchant for the preservation of the vestiges of antiquity, the change would seem as useless as it is out of taste.

Near this place, by the road side, is a chalybeate spring, once held in some repute; but never having been properly enclosed, or made a matter of profitable consideration, it is now neglected and forgotten.

Returning again by Vauxhall, we proceed along the eastern edge of the buildings, by the back of the Barracks, to the bottom of Belmont Row. We will here vary our walk, by taking the towing path of the lower branch of the Birmingham Canal. Following its course, through lands now chiefly laid out for gardens, thinly sprinkled with dwelling-houses, we come to its point of junction with the *Warwick Canal*. This situation is rendered busy by the wharfs, warehouses, and manufactories, which edge the latter-named Canal, but in other respects, the aspect of the neighbouring land, to the left of our path, is rugged and miserable enough. On the right the scene now becomes more business-like. Nearly opposite to the junction of the two Canals, is the PROOF-HOUSE, where all barrels of guns, pistols, &c. must be tried, and marked with the Government Stamp, under a severe penalty. The place for proving the barrels of fire-arms, was

formerly, as has been noticed, at what was called the *Ordnance Office*, in Walmer-lane; and during the war, nearly 30,000 muskets have been there examined and finished monthly, for Government; exclusive of other barrels of all kinds, in great numbers, for home consumption, and for exportation. In the year 1813, a body corporate was formed by Act of Parliament, called "the Guardians, Trustees, and Wardens of the Gun-barrel Proof-House, of the Town of Birmingham." The house now before us, was erected immediately after. It stands conveniently on the bank of the Canal, and the access to it is from Banbury-street. It is a perfectly plain building, but it is rather singular that the architect should presume so much on its unadorned exterior, as to think *uniformity* also might be discarded. There are five windows on one side of the entrance, and four on the other.

Crossing the canal-bridge into Fazeley-street, we pass a black and blackening pile of mill-building; the powerful steam-engines, and extensive metal-rolling machinery of Mr. Phipson. This operation, of preparing metal for platers, button makers, and other manufacturers, is extremely curious and interesting, both as respects the ponderous nature of the agents employed, and the precision and uniformity with which they execute their work. At the top of the street a considerable space of ground is enclosed as a CEMETERY for the Parish of St. Martin. At the time of its being first adapted to this purpose, it was intended and attempted to unite the two divisions; thus abruptly closing up this end of Fazeley-street; the inhabitants, however, properly resisted this infringement on their rights, and by a summary proceeding, destroyed, every night, the walls which had been built up during the day. The obnoxious scheme was at length given up, and the road continues open.

From this spot we observe, on our right, the CHA-

**CHapel of St. Bartholomew**, a neat and plain brick building, standing in a very irregularly-formed, but spacious burial-ground. This Chapel was erected in 1749, on land presented by John Jennens, Esq. The interior is fitted up with considerable taste, but the galleries are hung very low. The architectural ornaments of the chancel-end, and the carved work of the altar piece, are well executed. The organ, (by England), is a powerful and richly-toned instrument. This Chapel is another instance in which the orthodox adherence to the *eastern aspect* for the altar-end, has been disregarded. The ground-plot of the building is placed parallel with the most complete row of houses, and in consequence, points nearly north and south.

Passing a short distance along Park-street, we turn up Freeman-street and enter Moor-street, opposite to a handsome Meeting-house belonging to the Unitarian Dissenters: This is called the **NEW MEETING**,\* in contradistinction from the Place of Worship of the old or original Presbyterian congregation, which at first met in a yard at the bottom of Digbeth, and afterwards in Old Meeting-street; from which this was a separation in the year 1730. The building then erected as the "New Meeting" was in better taste than most others of that date. It was destroyed by fire, with other property to an immense amount, at the political riots of 1791. The present edifice was built after the lapse of almost fourteen years; it is faced with stone, and possesses considerable architectural merit. The approach to it is by a bold flight of steps; the basement is massy, and indented into a convenient piazza, from whence proceed doors to the several parts of the building; above, rise pilasters of the Ionic order, crowned with a well-proportioned pediment. Within, the place is commodious, but the appearance plain, even

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\* View, Number 6.





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7 Carr's Lane Meeting. — 8 Public Office — 9 Statue of Nelson

to baldness; some connexion seems to have existed in the minds of the contrivers, between the simplicity of the Gospel, and the absence of taste within the edifice where it is preached. These things are now better understood. If however, the congregation want taste, they abound in liberality; this is evinced in a variety of modes, and not least in a lofty pile of building, adjoining the Meeting, and occupied by Sunday Schools, some of the best conducted, and the most effective in their results, of any in the town. In these schools, about 700 children, girls and boys, are educated. The excellent and justly-celebrated Dr. Priestley, officiated as one of the Ministers of this congregation, from the year 1780, till he was hastily removed by the riots.

*Carr's-lane*, a turn to the right at a little distance, contains another large Dissenting Place of Worship,\* where a congregation of Independents assemble. This spot was first so occupied in 1748, but the place was twice enlarged; and at length in 1818, it was taken entirely down, an additional space of ground purchased, and the Meeting rebuilt on a still increased scale, and in a style of architecture, novel, bold, and massy, but exhibiting decided marks of genius in the artist.

The street being narrow, the idea of rendering the entire front ornamental was discarded as useless; where no adequate view could be obtained. The frontispiece therefore was formed into a gigantic, unadorned, perhaps *heavy*, mole-like frame, hollowed into an arch of large span; within which appear the entrances, tastefully, but chastely decorated; thus bringing the ornamental part within the scope of the spectator, when placed only at a few yards distant. The interior is more adorned, the style generally noble and classical, the ceiling beautifully finished in square compartments; but a

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\* View, Number 7.



colonnade of the Corinthian order is introduced behind the pulpit, of which the intention, or the architectural necessity, is not obvious. On the whole, this edifice is creditable to the genius of the designer, and to the taste of the managing committee in approving the design.

We must not speak so highly of the exterior of the PUBLIC OFFICE, situated at a small distance in Moor-street. This is a stone building, erected in 1806, rather gaily and expensively, than tastefully or massively characterised, and therefore the less consistently with the purpose of its destination. The architecture is Ionic, on a rusticated basement; but agreeably to the custom of the time, the fine forms of the order are disfigured by *apogiaturas* and affectations. At the back are placed the prisons, and the apartments of the keeper.

This mass of building was erected in 1795, before which time the town prison had been a miserable and ill-conducted establishment, in a close and ill-chosen situation, at the bottom of Peck-lane. It is now airy, commodious, and healthy, and presenting every comfort that is desirable in such a place. The cells of the male and female inmates are properly entirely unconnected, and the yard provided for exercise by day, is also, for the same purpose of separation, divided into two parts by a high wall. The front building contains rooms for committee meetings, and other purposes, on the ground floor; the upper story is occupied as the *Police Office*, and the principal apartment is well arranged for the purpose.\* This room is also, for want of a better, occasionally used for the reception of *Town's Meetings*, though, from its small size, and its interior fittings, it is altogether unsuitable for such adaptation. This, in cases of considerable interest and crowded attendance, has sometimes led to comie

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\* View, Number 2.

results ; such as the division of the Meeting, and the appointment of two Chairmen, acting in separate rooms ;—or the hurried adjournment of the assemblage to some uncomfortable place of greater area. A very large and simply decorated room for such public purposes is still among the desiderata of Birmingham, and, it may be hoped, will not be forgotten by the contrivers of any future market buildings.

This is one of the quarters in which the centre way of the streets has lately been formed of broken stones instead of solid pavement ; on the principle of Mr. M'Adam. We much question the propriety of this system, as applied to *streets* ; at all events, it has been ill-managed in Birmingham, and perpetual repairs are the consequence. Ignorance has something to do with this ;—we have actually observed, in different spots, *round, unbroken gravel*, thrown down, under the complimentary title of a *repairing material* !

We now open on the steep ascent of *High-street*, and our attention is caught by the statue placed near the centre of the space, to the memory of LORD NELSON.\* This was erected in 1809, by public subscription. The statue and its accompaniments are in bronze, and represent the naval hero standing in a dignified attitude, in his full uniform, and decorated with the various honorary insignia which he had received from different powers. The left arm rests on an anchor, and the group is filled up by other emblematical devices. The resemblance of the countenance is considered very faithful. Whether the *full-sized* flag staff, and the *diminutive model* of a ship of war, are correct portions of the *same group*, may fairly be questioned. The pedestal is circular, of white marble, and charged with groups of appropriate figures in high relief. The style of the whole is masterly and effective ; it was executed by West-

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\* View, Number 2.

macott, and is worthy of the talents of that eminent sculptor. It was opened to public view on the day appointed as a jubilee, on the *entrance* of his late Majesty into the fiftieth year of his reign, and commemorates the time when all the world disputed, whether the King had reigned 49 or 50 years;—whether the *day* of his coronation, in 1760, was or was not *its own first anniversary*.

To defend the work from injury, it is surrounded by iron palisades in the form of boarding pikes, enclosing a small square, at each corner of which is a large-sized ship lantern, bearing a brilliant gas flame.

A tradesman, resident in the neighbourhood (the late Mr. Farror), at his death, bequeathed *sixpence per week*, for the purpose of keeping the basement and statue free from the accumulation of dirt. There is something whimsical in the first idea of so minute a bequest, but a little reflection will discover the good taste it exemplified. The action is worthy of imitation, as tending to produce excellent effects by the use of small means.

A few minutes' walk now brings us to the top of the hill, where we conclude our third walk.

## THE FOURTH OR SOUTH-EASTERN WALK.

Our next circuit will be a long one, as its course will lead us out beyond the south-eastern limits of the town and its dependencies. We commence by descending the hill of High-street. Near the upper part, on the left, is a fair specimen of the old style of building; composed of timber framing, filled up with lath and plaster work. The date of these is usually about the close of the sixteenth century.

The view downward, from the brow of the hill, is striking; the houses on each side are lofty and substantial; the Church of St. Martin, tolerable only in mass, execrable in its details, except its fine and lofty spire, occupies the principal space in the front; and the eye traces the line of street on its right, to a considerable distance; penetrating into Deritend; passing by and over Mr. Beardsworth's Repository, on the top of which, a large figure of a *white horse*, makes, even at this distance, a conspicuous appearance. Behind the whole we catch a glimpse of green fields, and of the tranquillity of the country, which contrasts strikingly with the bustling scene immediately before us. From this spot the observer is apt to complain of the contour of *Nelson's Monument*, as seen in rear. Its parts being confounded in the distance, the whole effect is that of an overgrown reptile, writhing its limbs into fantastic forms, or of a gigantic dragon, spreading out its legs and wings.

Almost the whole of this open space was, not many years ago, choked by shabby and cumbrous piles of old building. A little above the spot now occupied by the statue, stood the Old Cross; placed there in ancient times, and renewed in various tastes, as occasion required. This was finally removed in 1784; but the other nuisances, the line of ill-com-

trived shambles, and a confused mass of dirty, crowded, and tottering houses, which almost surrounded the Church, were not cleared away till the commencement of the present century. Their eradication was a great and manifest improvement to the town.

Near the Church-yard, stands a curious, and, at first sight, questionable object. When the old buildings were removed, the operation revealed to view a *pump*, which had been long beneficial to the public;—a thing too valuable to be removed and lost; too unsightly to remain undisguised, in so imposing a situation. It was accordingly cased in stone-work of a fantastic and nondescript form, comprising and confounding the elements of Egyptian and Grecian architecture, but singularly unfavourable to the action of those essential parts, the *handles*; while the equally indispensable *spout* is travestied by being inserted into a mask, representing a lion's face, which breaks the stream, and prevents the unembarrassed flow of water. And this was Birmingham taste and science, deliberately and wilfully exerting themselves, under the approbation of the public authorities.

The present market-place having been, as above described, nearly covered with buildings, the right and left openings naturally took different names. The right side (in descending) was called *Spicer*, afterwards *Spiceal-street*, which name it still bears; and the left, from Moor-street to Park-street, took or continued the name of the *Bull-ring*. We say *continued*, because the name is probably older than the vanished destructions. It arose from certain privileges granted to one John Cooper, who flourished in the High-street, about three hundred years ago, and who was a benefactor to the town. One of the remunerating privileges claimed by the said Cooper, was, that he should *bait a bull* in this part of the town, whenever he pleased. There is no ac-

boasting for the tastes of long-passed ages; and there are still, not far distant, towns, whose denizens would highly esteem the charter which should leave them in the undisturbed enjoyment of that ancient and "truly British sport," as it has been called; free from all apprehension of the denationalizing efforts of Sunday Schools and Abolition Societies.

This triangular area, the seat of the market, is, on Thursdays and Saturdays crowded nearly to the top. Different parts are by common consent appropriated to the sale of different articles, and lines and alleys of stalls are erected, some of which have coverings to afford a partial shelter to a few of the vendors; but many more are exposed, with their benches and stalls, to all the visitation of the elements. The scene is one of great throng and animation, and it is by no means easy to cross from Spital-street to the opposite side of the way, with a carriage. Even the causeways attached to the Church-yard are filled with small dealers, down to the junction with St. Martin's-lane; on the right side, with exhibitions of books, stationery, white mice and singing-birds; on the left, with large parterres of crockery ware, displayed in regular figures, and in very considerable quantities. Near the Statue is placed a beadle, with the public or standard scales and weights, which every one is at liberty to have recourse to, free of expense, to ascertain the correctness of those used by the market attendants.

We now reach the palisading of ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH-YARD. Through this enclosure there was originally a public walk, but since the houses surrounding it were removed, the gates have been kept locked; nor is the exclusion of any considerable consequence to the inhabitants, especially as there is nothing in the appearance of the edifice it encloses to induce any wish for a close inspection.

The external aspect of the Church is mean and poor. It is to the eye a brick building, erected in the *dark ages* of the arts, and not even displaying those forms of which its common material is susceptible. Its real antiquity is, however, very great,—probably not less than a thousand years have elapsed since its foundation: but being in a state of decay, the whole of the body and tower were, in the year 1690, cased with brick; when the workmen endeavoured to give additional effect to their operations, by burlesquing the windows and other parts. This coating of brick was necessary to preserve the edifice from falling, but the alteration of the original forms was an act of malice prepense against a venerable antique, and is to be lamented accordingly. The spire alone escaped the hands of the *master masons*, and stands, a fine monument of the skill of the ecclesiastical architects of the olden time. Later repairs have restored the four pinnacles at the base of the spire, when it was suggested by the absolute wisdom of the time, to attach *vanes* to each. The only convenience of these appendages is, that being arbitrarily acted on by the eddying currents of air driving round the spire; any person who looks up at one or the other, may at all times perceive the indication of a wind blowing according to his individual wishes.

About fifty years ago, in removing some old building in St. Martin's lane, the workmen perceived that the Church-yard wall was only a case to a much lower one, which being laid open, exhibited the date of 1310. Further research discovered still another wall, not more than four feet high from the lower level, crowned with an antique coping of the Saxon character;—probably the original fence of the enclosure. This curious discovery showed that the Church originally stood on the slope of the hill, with an access to its interior, by a flight of steps, and that the Church-yard has been gradually raised



10 S.<sup>t</sup> Martin's Church — 11 Old Crown Inn — 12 Trinity Chapel





to its present high elevation by the accumulation of bodies interred there, during many centuries.

Not more appearance of antiquity is preserved within the Church, than without. The interior is handsome and rich, its ornaments bold, imposing, and in good taste, but modern. There remain, near the north-western angle of the Church, two very fine antique monuments, consisting of recumbent figures in white marble; but it is not known whom they represent. The shield of one is charged with the *Bend Lozenge* of the *de Birmingham*s, and is conjectured to be the effigy of William, who lived in the reign of Edward the First. The other is far more ancient. Both are fine works of their kind, and deserve more care than they receive, in a place where the inhabitants should be chary of the few remnants of antiquity they possess. The Church underwent a thorough repair in 1786,—not before it was wanted,—but it is impossible not to feel regret that the spenders of the money did not avail themselves of the assistance of some person of taste and judgment; to preserve such of the vestiges of its ancient state, as from their comparative entireness might still have been suffered to remain in sight. “Although I pleaded,” says *Hutton*, “without a fee, I was no more regarded than some who plead with one. *It is easy to destroy that which can never be restored.*”

Descending the hill, with the Church to our right, we will just look into Park-street, where, at a small distance from us, is a *Charity School*, belonging to the Unitarian Dissenters. It was established in 1760, and the present building, a large and commodious house, was purchased in 1791. Both boys and girls were originally received, but in the year 1813, it was agreed, at a general Meeting of the Subscribers, to admit girls only. The number is generally about forty-five; they are clothed, maintained, and judiciously educated, so as to form

respectable members of society in the domestic capacity.

Close to this School is the *Female Lancasterian School*, whose entrance is from a back street. This institution is likewise well conducted, and productive of excellent results.

Entering Digbeth (*Duck's-bath*, according to *Hutton's* etymology—formerly *Well-street*, an obviously appropriate name), we observe several water-carts, standing to be filled by the streams which flow through elevated troughs; this is effected by the labour of the concealed operators at the pumps. This is the seat of the great bed of soft water, from which the town is supplied, through the medium of these carts. We are now in the lower part of the old town, but the whole aspect of the street has been gradually changed during the last thirty years. There was, till lately, on the right, near the farther end, a small mass of very ancient buildings of the black and white order, projecting inconveniently beyond the proper line. These, however, among other late alterations, have been swept away, and neat new houses, with shops, erected. A short space of time will probably see the whole of this mis-shapen termination reduced to a uniform width, and rendered more fit for the London entrance into the town.

A little beyond the opening of Digbeth, we cross the *River Rea*, which, till dammed up to supply the very ancient Mill, which stands a quarter of a mile below, was an inconsiderable and fordable stream, passed probably by pedestrians with the help of stepping-stones. For many centuries a bridge has however been necessary. The one we now cross, was erected in 1789, but left in an unfinished state till about ten years ago, when it received its present fantastic completion. The piers or pedestals which strengthen the balustrades, are charged with some sculptured ornaments, which, at first sight, seem

intended to represent the well-wigged heads of imaginary judges or divines;—or it might be, of road commissioners, the promoters of the work; placed there to keep all secure by their own essential *gravity*. Closer inspection however, shows them to be solid *lumps* of stone, scored on their facings with the heraldic glories of the house of Birmingham, and adorned with ponderous wreaths of laurel, cut out of the same blocks.

We are now in the Hamlet of Deritend. *Dirtey*, or *Dirty-end*, according to *Leland*;—the *Rea-gate-end*, as conjecturally derived by *Mr. Hamper*, a skilful antiquary, and long a resident in the place; and certainly the latter etymology is to be preferred. This extensive Hamlet is in the Parish of Aston, and is of considerable antiquity. The Chapel, dedicated to St. John, which we now approach, was first erected in 1382, but the ancient edifice being completely worn out, it was rebuilt in its present form in 1735. Beyond the Chapel, are a few more houses in the lath and timber style; of these the *White Lion* and *Old Crown* Inns, are the best specimens; the latter\* is a very fine old edifice of the kind; is a good deal enriched by carved work, and has suffered little alteration in its appearance, except on the ground-floor, where bow-windows have been introduced, spoiling the effect of the ancient projecting upper story. The central or entrance projection is very prominent.

Deritend seems to have continued a single street, till about the year 1767, when a turnpike road was opened to Alcester, and sometime after, this became the regular egress for Coventry, the road to which had formerly led round by Coleshill. Since these changes, the increase of buildings and streets has been rapid and constant.

Quitting here the principal or High-street, we

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\* View, Number 11.

turn to the left along Heath-mill-lane, at the end of which are some iron-works called *Cooper's Mills*, which, according to *Hutton*, were probably set in motion by the waters of the Rea, during the era of the Heptarchy. They are however now more indebted to the power of steam than to the tricklings of a petty river. Crossing the Warwick canal, we continue in a straight line through a poor street till we reach a point where several roads diverge. We here bear rather to the right up Garrison-lane, which affords a pleasant prospect over Vauxhall, Ashsted, the Barracks, &c. The upper part of this road, a few years ago, presented the appearance of one of those deeply-excavated ways, which abounded near all large towns, occasioned by constant wear and no renewals. A little beyond, we make a short turn to the right over a stile, and by a quiet field path, affording in its course one of the most interesting views over the town, we reach the Coventry road. Nearly opposite to us is a small shattered brick ruin, the remnant of *Bordesley Hall*, an elegant mansion, built by the first John Taylor, Esq. whose name we have mentioned, as a great improver of the manufacturing celebrity of the town. The situation of the house, before the increase of building, must have been delightful; and considerable taste was displayed in the decorations of the grounds, which, though not extensive, were well varied. This was one of the residences which suffered the fires of martyrdom at the riots; the riots, to which a Birmingham narrator has so often occasion to allude; and which form such an era in our modern history. The place before us remained in the state in which the flames had left it, during the life of the then possessor; who could afford to suffer the diminished profits of the domain, and who perhaps thought such a recollection of the spirit of the time would afford an instructive memento. Both the walls of the house, and the ornamental scenery of the little

park, were therefore suffered quietly to approach the beauty of decay. The face of things has, however, been latterly completely altered. Several new houses have been erected in different parts; the trees cut down, and the remains of the house reduced to the one small mass which we see. A small brook crosses the road below us, which having been dammed up, served as the feeder to a fine sheet of ornamental water; this however is now set at liberty, and the quondam pond brought into cultivation: We here enjoy a good view of the Eastern end of a newly-erected Gothic Chapel, which at present seems delightfully placed in the fields, but which will probably soon drag after it, piles of brick and mortar into the country. Advancing up a gentle ascent, we arrive at the place where the London roads, through Coventry and Stratford, diverge. Our researches still prevent our return into the town, and lead us a little way up the *Stratford branch*. We now pass by the Western front of TRINITY CHAPEL,\* the Gothic edifice just alluded to. This is a work of considerable architectural merit, rather in the taste and style of King's College Chapel, Cambridge. It is without spire or tower, and the close imitation of its archetype, in the high-peaked barn-like roof, broken only by the little pinnacles rising from each buttress, to be admired requires to be appreciated by a scientific eye. This Western front however is admirable. There is a boldness and grandeur, as well as (we believe) a novelty, in the combinations of the entrance, which reflect great credit on the architect, Mr. F. Goodwyn. The commodiously-placed door-ways are included within a finely-turned and spacious sheltering arch, tastefully and rather richly adorned within and under, while its outer contour is with great skill combined and blended with the other ornamental parts of the work. The interior is

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\* View, Number 12.

scarcely correspondent; or rather it is not entirely consistent with itself. The Eastern end is highly adorned; the two pulpits and the communion table richly fitted up, but the whole of the remainder is extremely plain; the walls being deficient even in those accompaniments of columns or pilasters which the arched and ribbed ceiling demanded. Another instance of the result of considering architectural display as merely *decorative* and unconnected with the actual formation of a building. The altar piece, a painting lately added, representing Christ healing at the Pool of Bethesda, is by the Messrs. Foggo. It possesses high pictorial merit, whether as regards the composition and expression of the figures, the arrangement of the groups, the harmony of the colouring, or the general effect of the whole.

About this place was another extraordinary instance of the depth to which our ancestors suffered their roads to be worn, without being at the pains of repair. *Hutton* states that during the early part of the last century, it was here in some parts fifty-eight feet below the bank. This, we presume to think an error in the record. Looking at the height of a house of three moderately-lofty stories, and imagining a hollow-way deep enough to conceal two such dwellings, the one piled on the other, the statement seems incredible. At a rather later period however, it is certain that a well-loaded waggon of hay was completely sunk, and lost to view between the aspiring banks. This part of the road is called **CAMP-HILL**, and took its name from the encampment of the Parliamentary forces on the spot, in the year 1643, when the inhabitants of Birmingham generally took part against Charles the First. Their resistance to the progress of Prince Rupert's army on its march from Oxford, caused a smart action, in which the spirited defenders of the place were routed by superior numbers. The Prince was so much provoked by the pertinacity of his inconsiderable force,

that he set fire to the town, by which, several houses in Bull-street were consumed; and levied heavy contributions to prevent any future demonstrations.

A bend to the right, leads us from the Stratford to the Alcester road. At the point of junction with the latter, stands a fine old timbered mansion. Its date, as seen over the entrance, is 1602, and till some injudicious alterations lately made, injured its exterior, it was perfect and entire. Its character is now much changed; and the trifling addition to the size of the lower rooms, is dearly purchased by the loss of the characteristic projection of the upper parts of the house.

Turning now towards the town, we enjoy a fine view; comprising a considerable portion of Birmingham, and extending over Edgbaston and the adjoining country, terminating in the undulating line of Bromsgrove Lickey. We enter Deritend by Moseley-street. The buildings on our left, a little way down, are those of an extensive Brewery. We turn along Alcester-street, for the purpose of noticing the extremely gay front of Messrs. Fuller's Distillery; consisting of a richly-decorated Doric Piazza below, with an Ionic story above; of stone too; no stuccoed imitation. How such a piece of work straggled up into this obscure situation; or what motive was strong enough to induce such a display of prodigal expenditure, it is difficult to conjecture.

*Bradford-street*, the second which crosses Alcester-street, offers, to the right, a good view of *Trinity Chapel*; though it is to be regretted that this building was not placed so as to fill the centre of the vista. The view down the street to the left also is rather striking; commanding the Churches and several principal objects, well disposed. This street received its name from Henry Bradford, who, in 1767, foreseeing that the extension of Deritend only waited for a commencement, offered a freehold to the first person who would build a house upon his



estate. The result has shown the correctness of his anticipations, in the rapid growth of the ten or twelve long streets of new Deritend.

The straight line before us, would bring us to the right-hand corner of Smithfield; but we shall make a detour, in order to pass by the extensive establishment of Mr. Beardsworth, whose "Repository," distinguished by the emblematic *white horse*, mounted on its roof, is visible from the hill of High-street. This is a very well-conducted concern, where a large assortment of carriages, and a considerable number of horses, are constantly on sale by private contract; and on the morning of every Thursday, by public auction.

SMITHFIELD, as we have stated, is the site of the ancient Manorial residence of the de Birmingham. It received its present form and arrangements in 1816, when the moat was filled up, and every vestige of its original state erased. The aspect now is that of a spacious quadrangle, with broad ways along three of its sides; the principal part of the area being walled and palisaded round, and divided into compartments for the reception of cattle, &c.

Turning into Bromsgrove-street, a wide opening to the left, and then outwards, down a short branch street or alley, the stranger may, if he be disposed, follow the track of the rivulet which fed the moat; and the peculiarity of whose course, being parallel with an opposite current, has been remarked in our historical part. The filling up of the moat has turned the course of the stream, and its former bed is partly obliterated. It is however open in part, and the path by its side, leads to some very pleasant walks along the branches of the River Rea, which is divided in order to feed the Mills in its course.

Returning by Hurst-street, and crossing Bromsgrove-street, we pass by a large and powerful spring, called *LADY-WELL*; probably of ancient celebrity, and named in especial honour of "our lady." This

spring rises close to the surface of the ground, and appears in the form of a small enclosed pool of ancient aspect. It affords a perennial supply of the finest and softest water. Close to this, are the *Lady-well Baths*, perhaps the most complete in the kingdom. They are fed by the streamlet which overflows from the adjoining "well," and by other springs. The swimming-bath is a pond 36 yards long and 18 wide, varying in depth from three to five feet, placed in a retired garden, enclosed by walls; there are several cold baths, and every proper convenience for medical bathing, whether hot, tepid, vapour, or fumigating. The establishment is in the hands of Messrs. Monro, and is conducted with a degree of spirit hitherto unknown, and with much attention to the accommodation of the public.

Leaving the baths, and taking a tip-toe peep over a wall, we notice the very ancient PARSONAGE HOUSE of St. Martin's, a curious, low, straggling building, surrounded by a moat, like the Manor-house. Keeping along the wall of the garden or paddock belonging to this Parsonage, we enter Smallbrook-street, by *Lady-well Walk*. On our right, we observe a long range of low building, with a high roof. This was the old *Tithe Barn*, belonging to the Parsonage; useful in its original capacity, when the ground about it was ploughed and sowed; now, more appropriately and profitably employed as warehouses and shopping.

Two or three sharp turns bring us to the OLD MEETING-HOUSE, in Old Meeting-street. On this spot, was erected the Presbyterian Place of Worship, in the reign of King William the Third; by a congregation which had formerly assembled in a place at the bottom of Digbeth, which still bears the name of Meeting-house Yard. The first erected Place of Worship on the present spot, was in a very homely style of building, and *fortunately* shared the fate of its fellow in the purgative fires of 1791.

The two congregations of the Old and New Meetings afterwards met together at the Amphitheatre, in Livery-street, till the rebuilding of the Old Meeting, in its present form, which was accomplished in a few years. It is a neat edifice, well and substantially built with brick, except the basement, which is of stone, and forms a piazza. The interior is handsomely fitted up, and ornamented in good taste, but without frippery. A burying-ground of considerable capacity, is attached to the back of this Meeting; and near it stand the Sunday Schools, erected about five years ago, by subscriptions for the purpose.

From hence we quickly reach Worcester-street, the *Moorfields* of Birmingham; its lower half being almost exclusively inhabited by Brokers, whose dealings are extensive, in new and second-hand furniture, tools, machinery, &c.

Looking along *Bell-street*, a narrow turn to our right, we perceive a curious instance of the unexpected effect of irregularly-disposed streets. The spire of St. Martin's Church is here seen rising over the centre of the way; although, reasoning from a supposed knowledge of the position of the respective points, the observer would have imagined it to be far out of sight on the right hand.

Worcester-street originally joined New-street by a covered gateway. This seems to have been a favourite mode of saving ground, practised by our frugal ancestors. The dark and narrow access was removed, and the street much widened and improved, early in the present century. It is now a considerable thoroughfare for coaches. Not only do those for Bath and Bristol take this road, but some of the London coaches also, in preference to the more steep and hazardous descent of High-street.

We conclude our long, devious, and perhaps not very interesting excursion, on entering New-street, near its eastern termination.

## **THE FIFTH OR SOUTH-WESTERN WALK.**

Our present proposed route lies through a rather inconsiderable portion of the town; but we shall extend our walk through some tolerable country and suburban scenery.

Passing a little way along New-street, we turn to the left down Peck-lane; at the bottom of which, in a then close situation, was the old dungeon, till the Prison and Public Office in Moor-street were built. The miserable buildings composing and surrounding the prison having been cleared away, left a large open space, which is now well occupied by the NATIONAL OR MADRAS SCHOOLS, erected in 1813, for the gratuitous education of the children of the poor, on the system introduced by Dr. Bell. The building is substantial, well lighted, and unadorned. The ground-floor is adapted to receive five hundred boys, and there is a room over it of similar capacity, for the accommodation of an equal number of girls.

The left hand turning here is Dudley-street, and was perhaps the earliest of the extension of the town, being the road towards Dudley, which was a place of high importance, the residence of the dominant baron, to whom the manorial Lords of Birmingham long owed and paid "suit and service." The right hand part of this line took the name of Pinfold-street, from a *Pinfold* opposite to the opening of Peck-lane, which was not removed till 1752.

We now tread some dirty streets, which bring us to Suffolk-street, a straight, wide, and well-proportioned line; but occupied by houses of inconsiderable character. We cross it and proceed up Severn-street, where we find the SYNAGOGUE for Jewish worship, a respectable but not striking edifice; and the LANCASTERIAN SCHOOL, a large plain building;

opened in 1809, and calculated to receive four hundred boys, to be educated on the plan prescribed by the benevolent Joseph Lancaster. From some cause, neither this nor the National School\* are at this time in a flourishing condition. Probably a time of peace and employment is not the time for mental or moral improvement; all the growing children, who are able to earn a weekly pittance, are pressed into the service of the manufactories;—too often, by enhancing the already-increased gains of the parent workmen, to increase their means of vicious indulgence. Another cause too is, that *elemosynary* aid of a description which is neither seen, felt, eaten, nor drank, is apt to be undervalued; and when Schools for 1400 children were opened, and the work of education suddenly urged forward; it seemed as if, by consenting to send their children, the poor conferred some sort of favour on their benefactors.

At the foot of Suffolk-street, branches off the *Horse Fair*, so called from its former adaptation. This leads to Bristol-street, and then along the new line of the great western road, opened at the close of the last century. The town now extends far out in that direction, and new lines of streets, for upwards of a mile from this spot, have been and are laying down, principally towards the rising grounds of Edgbaston Parish. A few of those who wish to keep their well and closely-neighbour'd houses in the semblance of the country, persist in calling *Bristol-street*, the "*New Road*," a name which it bore for a few years after its formation, but which

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\* We never understood the *pourquoi* of this appellation. The establishment of these Schools was subsequent to the "*Royal Lancasterian*," which, as their name indicates, had been sanctioned and patronised by *Majesty*, and proved to be conducted on a system calculated for the instruction of the poor of the nation. Dr. Bell's system possessed no striking feature of novelty, and was not even invented in England.

is now nearly obsolete. Our course lies to the right, through Exeter-row and Bath-row, names indicative of their having been formerly on the line of the Western road. At the end of Exeter-row is *Holloway Head*, a name which perpetuates the recollection of one of the deeply-worn roads which we have before mentioned. In this, thirty years ago, a carriage was nearly concealed between the high embankments which formed the causeways. Leaving Bath-row we will still pursue the course of the old road, now a retired lane bearing to the left, and forming a pleasant walk, varied if we choose, by field paths, to the village of *Edgbaston*.

This was, till lately, a rural situation, and its ancient Church and simply-railed Church-yard, maintained the sequestered and tranquil character of rusticity. It was a valuable relic of aboriginal simplicity, in the near neighbourhood of bustle and business. Improvement has, however, discovered and disturbed this retreat; it is become a smart and fashionable appendage to Birmingham. The old, wild, and picturesque lanes are trimmed and spruced; gay villas and mercilessly straight streets stalk up to the very precincts of the sanctuary; the Church is modernised, and the Church-yard itself, that quiet and soothing spot, has been as tastelessly as needlessly violated, by edging it with red brick walls, topped by vile aristocratic iron railing; the gates locked up in useless care, to prevent the approach of imaginary depredations.

Near the Church, is one of the prettiest cottage residences in the neighbourhood, tastefully decorated, and surrounded by gardens of moderate size, skilfully laid out. From the road in front of this, there is an extensive and interesting prospect over a fine valley, to the distant opposite rising grounds about Moseley and the adjacent country; but the near view is injured by the new lines of houses from the Bristol road, which tend towards this point,

—The gate near the Church-yard leads into the grounds of Edgbaston Hall—a seat of Lord Calthorpe's, inhabited by Edward Johnstone, M. D. The house is a plain brick building, erected on the site of one destroyed by Oliver Cromwell; the park is not extensive, but is finely varied, contains much good timber, is adorned by a fine sheet of water, and commands beautifully rich prospects.

Bearing to the right, along what was once a very pleasant field-path, but which is now merged into *Calthorpe-street*, we observe several neat and elegant villas, residences of Merchants and Manufacturers of Birmingham. They are agreeably situated, and several of them built in good taste. We here pass over the Worcester canal, which is carried by a short tunnel under this high ground. This canal is here an ornament to the country, from the gently-curved course it takes, and from its considerable width.

Immediately beyond the Tunnel, is a large house, occupied as a Charity School, for the education of *deaf and dumb* children. This excellent institution took its rise from a lecture on the subject, delivered by Dr. De Lys, a resident Physician, at the Birmingham Philosophical Society in the year 1812. The lecturer rendered his address interesting, by exhibiting the progress in reading, writing, &c. made by a deaf and dumb child, in whose instruction he had been benevolently occupied; and concluded by calling the attention of his auditors to the situation of the unfortunate individuals, so imperfectly organized, when uninstructed. A public meeting was shortly after convened, at which it was determined to raise funds for the establishment and support of a Charity School, for the benefit of a number of these objects of compassionate interest. The School was opened in 1814, and the pupils placed under the care of Mr. Thomas Braidwood, grandson of the gentleman of that name who first distin-

guished himself for his skill in this species of tuition. The number of pupils has gradually increased with the increasing subscriptions, from fifteen to upwards of thirty. Their proficiency in reading, writing, and even in speaking, and their ingenuity in drawing, and in various works of art, are satisfactory and pleasing.

We now enter on the more completely-filled line of Calthorpe-street, which brings us to the *Five Ways*, so still called, although this point is now the confluence of six ways. The stranger may here return by a straight line into the town, passing by the Eagle Foundry and Baskerville-place; or he may extend his walk, sauntering up Hagley-row, the principal of these *ways*. The residences on this road, bespeak opulence and good taste; they are numerous, and have generally the desirable accommodation of gardens and shrubberies. It may not be amiss to follow their course as far as the Plough and Harrow, a small public house, with superb stables of modern-antique appearance, which will probably be sometime matched by an inn of magnitude and aspect to suit.

Before us, on the left side of the road, distant a quarter of a mile, is a large pile of building, labelled in front "Hazelwood School." This is an extensive and admirably-conducted establishment, which has latterly attained considerable celebrity. Nearly a hundred respectable youths are educated by Messrs. Hill, whose object has been to facilitate the acquirement of the various branches of knowledge, by the introduction of the most technical regularity of system; and to improve and excite their mental energies, by permitting them to govern their community by laws of their own formation, administered by officers selected from their own members. The Hazelwood mode of instruction has been minutely detailed in a work entitled "Public Education;" and the Messrs. Hill are ever politely anxious to



afford every information to those who are inclined to inspect their proceedings, which will amply repay the intelligent visitor for the time so occupied.

Turning to the right from hence, we pass the building to which is attached the tall Tower, or *Monument*, mentioned in our first tour. This is built of brick, is seven stories high, and was never made of any use, except in the capacity of pigeon-houses. It was erected in 1758, by John Perrott, Esq. whose name it partially bears, with an appropriate satirical adjunct—*Perrott's Folly!* We are now again on the *Ickenield-street*, along which, under the name of *Monument-lane*, we proceed, passing by a few handsome houses, till we take a field-path towards the town, which leads us to the bank of the Birmingham Canal. Here, on our right, is *Lady Wood House*, pleasantly situated in retired fields. Crossing the Canal, a little beyond, we soon after reach the Crescent Bridge, by a narrow lane through the midst of the numberless gardens which attracted our early attention.

From this angle of the Crescent, we will vary our walk, by passing below the High Terrace on which it stands; making our way among the Wharfs and Warehouses along the Canal; noticing the quantity of merchandise constantly arriving and departing, and receiving amusement from the busy scene. This brings us to the north-east extremity of the Crescent, from whence, following the wall of Baskerville-place, we reach Paradise-street, and then New-street. The junction of these streets is one of the most pleasing and lively spots in the town. An open space, receiving into one focus the radiations of six ways, there is a continual succession of objects; and being the centre of a busy manufacturing district, the throng of artizans leaving their several workshops, at the hour of *One*, and hurrying to their meal, has a particularly animated and cheerful effect; especially in this time of plentiful em-

ployment. The view along New-street also, from this point, with Christ Church as a fore-ground object, makes an agreeable picture, whose various features open upon us as we proceed along the street, to the place of our constant meeting and parting.

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We have thus completed five tolerably wide excursions through the streets of Birmingham; in doing which it is hoped that no object of any moment has been omitted. For not penetrating into every part, we make no apology; it were useless to traverse a series of unmarked and uninteresting streets, for the sole purpose of "seeing the place."—Middling and blackened houses, smoking manufactories, and pebbled pavements, are sufficiently common. The fear is, that we have already led our charge too far, and that partial appreciation of the splendours past and present, of our native town, may have induced us, in too many instances, to point out indifferent objects, as worthy of recollection. At all events however, we have been brief, and have avoided dwelling long upon minor points.

We have still to devote a very few more pages to certain subjects which could not be discussed in any of our former sections. Institutions and customs whose action is rather felt, than their existence rendered visible by any external demonstration;—which merit the notice of the stranger, though they present no fixed point for the eye to rest upon.

**PUBLIC EXPENDITURE,**  
**AND ENDOWED**  
**ESTABLISHMENTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE POOR,**  
**&c. &c.**

Birmingham is destitute of those sources of public revenue, which enable the authorities of many towns to expend large sums in improvements and decorations. All works of this kind are, therefore, paid for by assessments on the inhabitants, levied under the provisions of Acts of Parliament, passed at different times for the purpose. Of these, the last, and the one by which it was endeavoured to avoid all the defects of the former ones, was passed in 1812.

These Acts enjoin the appointment of a certain number of Commissioners, define their duties and regulate their authority. The demands made on the pockets of the inhabitants by this authorised body, have latterly been considerable, in order to meet the large expenses occasioned by the improvements of late years; they are, however, cheerfully borne, when the expenditure has been judiciously incurred. If any complaint has been heard, it has perhaps been that too much has been attempted at once; but upon the whole, the various undertakings have been advantageous, both to the appearance of the town, and to the comfort of its inhabitants.

The relief of the poor, according to the legal establishments of the country, is of course effected by parochial rates, which, as was noticed while speaking of the Workhouse, have sometimes been extremely oppressive. Generally speaking, perhaps the total demand on residents in Birmingham, for Poor's Rates, Highway Rates, Church Rates and

dues of various sorts and sizes; and Assessed Taxes, rise at present, on an average, to half the sum paid as rent, for the premises occupied.

There are however, several endowments, most of them of a minor nature, for ameliorating the condition of the Poor, and for public purposes. Of these, the most considerable is LENCH'S TRUST, which consists of the rents of certain lands, bequeathed in the reign of Henry the Eighth, originally bearing value about £15 annually; but owing to the increase of the town, the consequent advancing importance of the lands, and the addition of various small bequests which have been merged into this Trust, the yearly rental is now about £600. This is appropriated agreeably to the intention of the donor, partly towards the repairs of the streets; and partly to the support of a number of alms-houses, for the benefit of poor widows; of these there are now three sets erected on this foundation, comprising in all, 112 rooms. The management of the property is vested in fifteen Trustees, being inhabitants of Birmingham. It is extremely-well administered, and its good effects are considerable.

FENTHAM'S TRUST, for the education of a number of poor children, has been noticed in reference to the Blue Coat School. The bequest also provides clothing for a certain number of poor widows. Its date is 1712.

A bequest from *Mrs. Crowley*, in 1733, supports and educates a number of female children. This is also merged into the Charity School; and the girls are distinguished, like the boys of Fentham's Trust, by their *green* apparel.

JACKSON'S TRUST is one of small amount, and trifling benefit. It provides for the placing out a certain number of apprentices annually, giving with each, a fee of £2. 10s. 0d.

The charitable Institutions of various descriptions are numerous and important. Several of these

have been noticed while discussing the buildings they occupy. Among them we may farther enumerate the various Sunday Schools, of which almost every Place of Worship supports its own. The total number of children instructed in their Schools must amount to several thousands.—The Institution for the relief of Bodily Deformities, established in 1817, and held at a house in New-street.—A HUMANE SOCIETY, for recovering of persons apparently drowned, established in 1790, and now attached to the General Hospital.

There are also various Institutions conducted by private circles of friends; such as *Clothing Societies*, in several forms;—Societies for providing attendance and necessaries for *Lying-in Women*;—*Depositing Associations*, for the encouragement of habits of diligence, by occasionally relieving unavoidable distresses by pecuniary donations, &c.

Much benefit also results from the establishment of CLUBS, as they are called;—associations of artizans and others, who pay a small sum periodically into their treasury, which enables them to draw a weekly supply in case of sickness. These Clubs are very numerous; and some of them of very old standing. From whatever authorities they first drew the data on which their rules of payment are grounded, they appear, from experience, to be founded on correct estimates of the *chances* as they are called, of human health. Their good effects are only lessened by the circumstance of their being held at public houses, which occasionally induces too great expenditure on sensual gratifications, at the times of meeting.

We regret that we cannot record a *Savings Bank* among the institutions of Birmingham. It *was*,—and *is not*.—One was established, at a period when the working classes had nothing to save; it was ineffective, and has been laid aside. Its re-establishment, would be singularly beneficial, as it

would offer a motive for accumulating the sums, now so much more easily earned—so often spent in reckless dissipation:—for saving that time, now so much loitered away, to the injury of the individual and the community.

Similar in intention to the Clubs we have described, but on a larger scale; free from the incitements and unnecessary expenses, and enjoying the advantage of superior management, is the PROVIDENT SOCIETY; conducted by persons of high respectability, who gratuitously pay their quota, and regulate the concerns of the Society, which now enjoys a considerable income from moneys invested in the Stocks.

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### MISCELLANEOUS PARTICULARS.

The intellectual character of Birmingham, like that of most other large towns, is advancing. This is inevitable, when the vastly-increased extent of public education is considered. The lower classes all know *something*, and the upper, to keep their advanced post in society, are urged to an increase of knowledge in an equal ratio. A general acquaintance with English literature is no longer considered remarkable, and the progress of a taste and feeling for the fine arts is very perceptible.\*

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\* The arts are cultivated as ministering to the perfection of the manufactures; but the time has not yet arrived when they shall be encouraged for their own sakes. Infected by the trading principle, our talented youth rush prematurely into the character of professional and profiting artists; “dealers and chapmen,” in the intellectual line. This accounts for the laborious errors, and highly-wrought anomalies, which our native sculptors have exhibited. Good workmanship, careful chiselling, may be purchased for two guineas per week; but the power to conceive and to combine is a much scarcer commodity. The doors of the academy are liberally opened; why are not its immunities more eagerly seized on?

Besides the two considerable public *Libraries*, there are several minor collections, as *artizans'* and *congregational Libraries*. Many circulating Societies are established, by which select parties of neighbours have the benefit of the new publications much sooner than they could by means of the regular libraries.

It is somewhat surprising that though the reading population of Birmingham is so great, there are only two NEWSPAPERS supported;—only one indeed to any very considerable extent. This one is the *Birmingham Gazette*, which has been established about sixty years. Its matter is almost confined to advertisements and announcements, direct or collateral; its politics courteously assimilating to the aspect of the time. The other is the *Birmingham Chronicle*, likewise an old-established print, but which was never received as an indispensable advertising medium. It has lingered in the hands of several proprietors and under several phases of political opinion. It is now respectably conducted, is moderate and unoffending in its politics, and of some literary pretension. Several attempts have been at different times made to establish a Newspaper in which strong expressions of political feeling should prevail, but they have not suited the taste of the Town. High or low—*Tory*, *Whig*, or *Radical*, all have glittered, sunk, and expired. Minor weekly publications, confined to literary subjects, the drama, &c. have also often been started, but have only borne a sickly life of a few weeks or months, before they have ceased to exist. In fact, the vast number of cheap publications issuing from the London presses, which circulate here, sufficiently accounts for the failure of local periodical works of miscellaneous interest.

The virulence of political party-feeling; whose furious effects in 1791, we have had occasion several times to mention under the technical name of

"*the Riots*," has much subsided; indeed, the prevalent characteristic, is a species of external apathy on subjects connected with political polemics. This degree of quietism, however, has its happy effect, in producing a general amalgamation of those who might otherwise be the opponent chiefs of hostile parties; and in ensuring extensive co-operation in public concerns, whether commercial or benevolent, among the respectable of all opinions.

A considerable number of the inhabitants of Birmingham, including a large portion of the working classes, find their evening's relaxation in spending several hours regularly at certain houses, of greater or less note, whose principal rooms for the reception of guests are termed, from the prevalence of the use of tobacco—**SMOKE SHOPS**. Here, ensconced in dense and choking clouds, the company sit, almost invisible to one another, in the enjoyment of various potations, more or less moderate in quantity; busily occupied by the discussion of some topic of local or general interest or curiosity; with the invariable accompaniment of a *pipe-obligato*.

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## THE MANUFACTURES OF BIRMINGHAM.

We had intended, as may be recollected,\* to give a select list of the principal manufacturing houses, whose processes are open to the examination of visitors. But conversation with several respectable individuals connected with such houses, has induced us to decline making any enumeration. We find that, generally speaking, there is a strong feeling of objection against admitting any stranger; partly from the apprehension of the operations being occasionally witnessed by those who may make

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\* See page 16.



improper use of the information acquired; and partly from the inconvenience and loss of time consequent on the admission of visitors; at the same time, there are comparatively few who absolutely refuse to open their doors to strangers, *unconnected with manufactures*, and introduced by respectable residents.

Under these circumstances any list of names were unnecessary. With the roll open before him the visitor must still apply to other quarters for introduction;—without it, he can still do the same. We would recommend attention, where the necessary facilities offer, to the *Metal Rolling Mills*; to the *Iron and Brass Foundries*; to the *Button, Button-shank, Plating, Whip, Japan and Papier Machée, and Cut Nail Manufactories*; to the *Glass Making and Cutting, Plating on Steel, Wire-drawing and Working, &c.* as exhibiting either the force of powerfully-applied and ponderous machinery, or peculiar ingenuity in the contrivances which are called for in the various processes.

Several of the Manufacturers of Glass, Japan, Plated, and Brass Goods, have *Show-rooms*. When this is the case, and when the stranger has the will and the ability to make purchases, he possesses a talisman which will usually gain him admission into the *penetralia* of the concern. In particular we recommend visits to the Establishments of Mr. Thomason and Mr. Jones, which are professedly places of exhibition; where the eye is gratified by the splendour and variety of the objects displayed; and where numerous articles of the light and ornamental kinds are constantly in course of fabrication; the witnessing of which may, at once, save to the stranger much trouble and research after the accessible manufactories of individual species.

Birmingham possesses every convenience which can be desired in the way of public conveyances in every possible direction. It is, in fact, not so much in the *line of communication*, as itself the centre

from which many routes diverge; the starting place for Coaches, Vans, Waggon, and Canal Boats, without number.

The Post-office arrangements have been continually improving for many years, and the hours of the arrival and departure of the Mails, are now well adapted for the convenience of receiving and replying to letters. It may not be amiss to add a statement of these particulars.

### POST-OFFICE REGULATIONS.

<i>Mails.</i>	<i>Depart.</i>	<i>Arrive.</i>	<i>Letters ready at</i>
Manchester,	$\frac{1}{2}$ p. 7, morn.	10, morn.	$\frac{1}{2}$ p. 10.
Liverpool,*	8, even.	$\frac{3}{4}$ p. 9, morn.	$\frac{1}{4}$ p. 10.
Sheffield,	$\frac{3}{4}$ p. 6, morn.	$\frac{1}{4}$ p. 4, aftern.	$\frac{1}{4}$ p. 5.
Holyhead,	$\frac{1}{2}$ p. 9, morn.	$\frac{1}{4}$ p. 4, aftern.	$\frac{1}{4}$ p. 4.
Walsall,	$\frac{1}{2}$ p. 9, morn.	$\frac{1}{2}$ p. 4, aftern.	$\frac{1}{4}$ p. 5.
Kidderminster, } Dudley, &c. }	$\frac{1}{2}$ p. 9, morn.	$\frac{1}{2}$ p. 4, aftern.	$\frac{1}{4}$ p. 5.
Oxford,	$\frac{1}{4}$ p. 2, aftern.	11, morn.	$\frac{1}{4}$ p. 11.
London, via War-	$\frac{1}{2}$ p. 4, aftern.	$\frac{1}{2}$ p. 10, morn.	11.
wick, }			
London, via Co-	5, aftern.	9, morn.	10.
ventry, }			
Bristol,	$\frac{1}{2}$ p. 6, even.	$\frac{1}{2}$ p. 6, morn.	7.

\* This Mail also takes second bags for Manchester and neighbouring places.

† The Office is shut at eight o'clock in the evening.

Letters should be put in an hour before the departure of the several mails; if after that time, one penny is paid to ensure their being immediately forwarded.

### BANKERS,

*With the London Houses they draw upon.*

Attwood, Spooner, and Co. *New-street*,—on Spooner, Attwoods, and Co.

Freer, Rotton, Lloyd, and Co. *New-street*,—on Hanburys, Taylors, and Co.

Galtons and James, *Steelhouse-lane*,—on Barclay, Tritton, and Co.

Gibbins, Smith, and Goode, *Union-street*,—on Esdaile and Co.

Mollitt, Smith, and Pearson, *Union-street*,—on Lubbocks, Foster, and Clarke.

Taylors and Lloyds, *Dale-End*,—on Hanburys, Taylors, and Lloyds.

† The Hours of Business are from Half-past Nine till Four.

## INNS.

The Hotel,	Temple-row,	The principal family house.
Stork,	Old Square,	Family and commercial.
Hen and Chickens,	New-street,	} Coach, family, and commercial.
Swan,	High-street and New-street,	
Albion,	High-street,	
Nelson,	High-street,	
Castle,	High-street,	
Saracen's Head,	Bull-street,	
St. George's Tavern,	High-street,	} Chiefly commer- cial.
Union,	Union-street,	
White Hart,	Digbeth,	
George	Digbeth,	
Woolpack,	Moor-street,	

## STAGE COACHES, WAGGONS, &amp;c.

At the Offices of any of the houses specified in our List, as COACH INNS, full information may be obtained as to the Departures of the various *Stage and Mail Coaches*.

There are *Fly Vans* to London and to Holyhead, which leave the Warehouse in the Bear-Yard, Bull-street, daily, and which travel nearly at Coach speed.

*The Principal Waggon Warehouses are*

For London, Oxford, Warwick, Southampton, &c.	} Golby, 52, Dale-End, Jolly, Bromsgrove-street, Bran, Red Lion, Digbeth.
Bristol, Bath, Gloucester, Worcester, Hereford, Sheffield, Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Cambridge, Liverpool, Manchester .....	
Bristol, Bath, Leicester .....	} Ashmore, Edgbaston-street.
Hull, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Cambridge, Liverpool, Manchester .....	
Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton .....	Howes & Co. Bordesley-st.
Walsall and Wolverhampton .....	Shackell, Dale-End.
	Tombs, Bear-Yard.
	Adams, New-street.

Sundry Minor Carriers at the *Fountain*, New-street; *Barrel*, Snow-hill; *Rose*, Edgbaston-street; *Spread Eagle*, Spicel-street; *Horse Shoe*, St. Martin's-lane; *Bell*, Phillips-street, &c.

The principal Wharfs for the conveyance of Goods by canal, are those near the *Crescent*;—in *Great Charles-street*;—Danks and Co. and Robinson's, in *Broad-street*;—Swaine's, *Friday-bridge*;—Pickford's, at the *Warwick Junction*;—Corbett's, *Aston Road*;—from almost every one of which, boats are daily or frequently loading to all the principal points.

The fullest information on all these subjects, will be found in the *Birmingham Directory*, or the *Birmingham Almanack*, both of which may doubtless be consulted by the stranger at his Inn.

### POSTSCRIPT.

So fearful have we been to let nothing escape our attention, that we have some difficulty in finding matter to fill up the blank page at the close of our work. It may, however, be worth noticing, that since the breach between the proprietor of the *Zion Hill Chapel*, and the members of the Scottish Kirk, took place, a Place of Worship for the latter congregation has been commenced in the right angle of the *northern* extremity of *Newhall-street*.

In addition to the descriptive matter which forms our *second walk*, it may be added, that the piece of land in *Union-street*, described as *vacant* (see p. 53) is now in course of occupation; the work of building is commenced, and a few weeks will probably see it covered thickly with small and closely-packed, but valuable closets and pigeon-holes for the transaction of business.

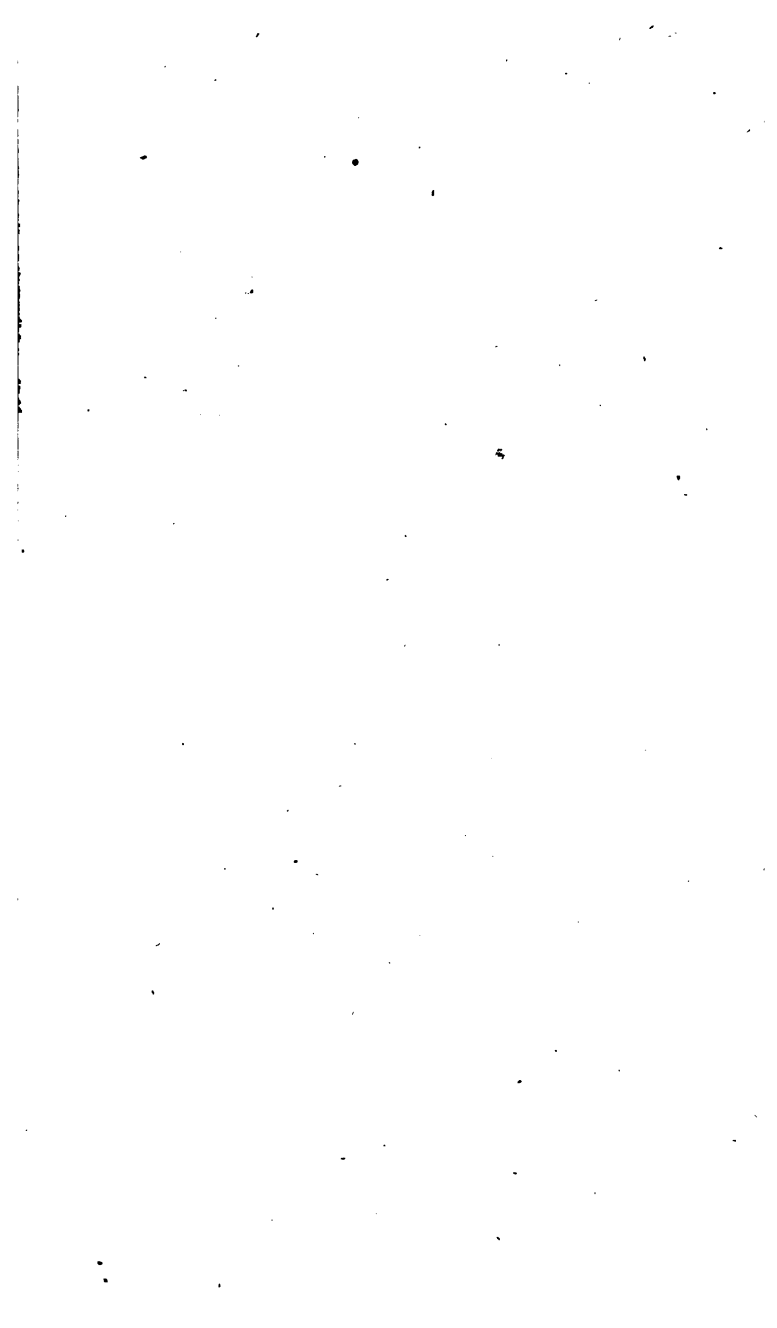
As a notable object in the same walk, we must also record the glories of a not unostentatious monument, attached, since we passed that way, to the south wall of St. Philip's Church, perpetuating the memory of one "David Owen, Gent." whose executors, unwilling that his benefactions should lose their meed of "fame," have taken the satirical hint of the Poet, and have elaborately "marked the marble with his name," and with the record of his bequest to a public charity. This ill-placed snowy mass, is one of those which are expressly known as "bits of Brummyjum." A decently-sized funereal urn, enveloped in profuse folds of *sheeting*, apparently just taken from the wash-tub, and shaded by the tresses of a *lilliputian* willow-tree, present altogether a combination of as well-worn allegory as ever graced the centre of a japanned tea-tray, or an elegiac *school-sampler* of the year 1780. When will the re-

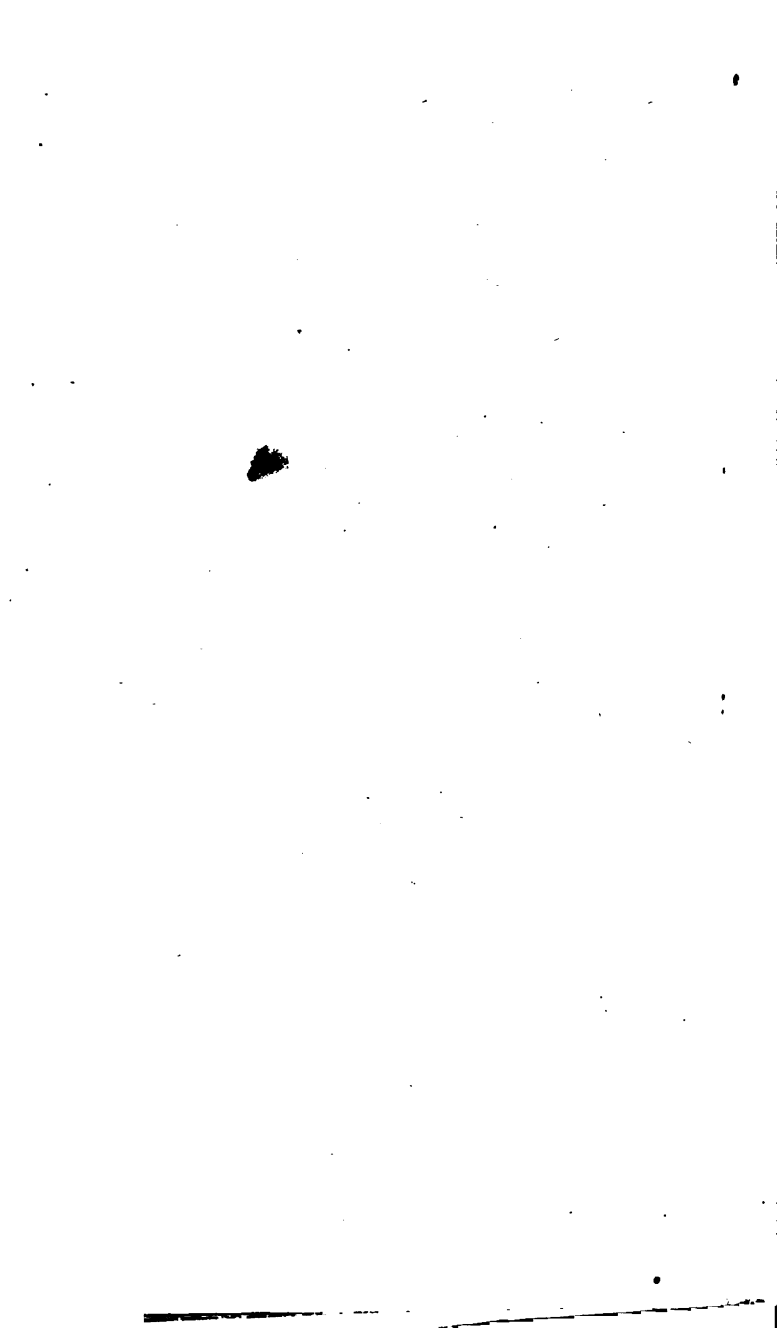
representatives of the unlearned defunct be taught the propriety of applying to purer sources of sentimental *post-obit-ism* than the pattern card of a stone cutter?

We wish to express ourselves more explicitly on the subject of *Clubs*, (see p. 104.) Such an aggregate of good is produced by these societies, if *well conducted*; and so much evil, if the contrary, that it would seem a matter worthy the attention of master-manufacturers, seriously to advise their workmen as to the course most advisable to be pursued. An industrious man may pay his money into the box during a long term of health; and when in the decline of life, he has occasion to seek relief from this source, it may be closed against him by numerous unforeseen circumstances; thus producing disappointment at the instant when long-trusted promises should be realised.\* Some principal manufacturers have established clubs for their own workmen, of which the accounts are managed by the heads of the concern, on sure principles, and independent of all attendance at *Public Houses*. Were such establishments general, they would be highly beneficial; but extensive associations, like the *Provident Society*, where the safety of the deposit is secured by the *public*, and not by individuals, are of all others most desirable, and most eventually beneficial. Were a qualified writer to publish a statement of the probable and possible mischances to which clubs on the common principle are liable; and to point out clearly the best mode of managing a *BENEFIT Society*, properly so called; he would be entitled to the lasting gratitude of the working classes.

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\* Some valuable observations on this subject will be found in *Hutton's Birmingham*, article "Clubs."









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